

**Rhetorics of Authority, Space, Friendship, and Race: A Qualitative  
Study of the Culturally Responsive Teaching of  
Native American Literatures**

by

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Dedicated to  
Paige Paulette (Patron) Duklet  
1946-2005  
for teaching me “sisu”

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## ABSTRACT

### **Rhetorics of Authority, Space, Friendship, and Race: A Qualitative Study of the Culturally Responsive Teaching of Native American Literatures**

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Chair: Anne Ruggles Gere

This dissertation is a qualitative research study of a ninth grade English classroom in which the teacher and students are reading the first novel by a woman of American Indian descent: *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* (1891) by S. Alice Callahan (Muscogee Creek). The researcher posits the term “understanding gap” as a site of inquiry into the difficulties faced by non-Native students and teachers: e.g., confusion about cultural differences, anger about the representation of different cultures in the texts, and lack of accessible background information. Using a Grounded Theory approach to data analysis, which emphasizes critical discourse analysis in concert with visual and spatial analysis, the study explores teacher authority, space, race, and friendship as methodology. The teacher’s authority in this classroom is complex, ambivalent, and dynamic, and she invokes cultural legitimacy to help her non-Native students connect with Native American issues. A spatial and discursive analysis of a privilege walk activity shows how such an intervention can mitigate the colormuteness in a racially charged classroom and desegregate the white/black boundaries of the customary seating arrangement.

Authorization of talk about race led to specific kinds of student understanding demonstrated in their writing: empathy, self-knowledge, and perspective. An intensive action research approach led to problematizing friendship as a methodological approach, suggesting rhetorical listening as a possible way to mitigate the potential risks. A hybrid discourse and spatial analysis leads to an articulation of the understanding gap that non-Native students experience when reading indigenous texts. A theory-based understanding of the gap creates the foundation for a greater understanding of effective Native pedagogy, insight into the particular challenges of teaching Native texts, and a re-visioning of what the project of culturally relevant pedagogy entails. Finally, this dissertation concludes that culturally relevant research—which includes holding high standards, valuing language, valuing community, enacting an ethic of caring to include friendship, and fostering social critique—is appropriate for studies on pedagogical approaches to Native American/American Indian literatures. It is the element of synergy, coupled with deep self-reflection, that give a theory of culturally relevant research the flexibility needed to adapt to different cultural context.

## Chapter One: Introduction

Teaching Native American/American Indian (NA/AI) literatures<sup>1</sup> poses a particular challenge not seen with teaching other multicultural literature. Descriptions of confusion (McLaughlin, 1997) and anger (Burlingame, 2005; Herman, 2005) permeate pedagogical accounts of teaching NA/AI literatures. Teaching such works for the sake of multiculturalism can have, unfortunately, a reverse effect: reinforcing stereotypes rather than eliminating them. Extreme examples include students showing up in class with a “Custer was right” T-shirt, wearing war paint, or wanting to hang up feathers outside the room during a Native American unit of study<sup>2</sup>. Even when student responses are not so blatantly confrontational, the entrenchment of misconceptions about NA/AI literatures is commonly seen in the classroom. For example, students reading Athabaskan oral narratives erroneously criticized grammar mistakes in the texts (they had been carefully edited by a prominent scholar). The literary works of Native Americans in general, and

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<sup>1</sup> Terminology is problematic. In public schools, the politically correct term is Native American literature, but many people whose work is described by the term object to it. For example, Sherman Alexie, a Spokane Indian says, “Native American is a guilty white liberal term” (Alexie, 1993). LaVonne Brown Ruoff, a noted scholar in the field, agrees with Alexie and argues for pluralizing literature to highlight the fact that the term is encompassing the literatures of over 400 distinct language and cultural groups. As a 20-year resident of Alaska, I’m sensitive to the possible exclusion of Alaska Natives when using the term American Indian. Shari Hundorf notes that “Although this fact is frequently overlooked, Native American comprises Indians and other groups of indigenous peoples as well, including Alaskan Eskimos, Canadian Inuit, Aleuts, and Native Hawaiians (all non-Indians). ‘Native’ can refer to all or any one of these groups, while ‘Indian’ is a more specific term.” (2001). Therefore, I have chosen to use both terms: Native American/American Indian in an effort to be inclusive. Like Ruoff, I am also pluralizing literature to signal the wide range of works that fall under this label. In the interest of saving space, I resort to the acronym “NA/AI literatures.” Although I have settled on a particular term for the purpose of writing this dissertation, I do not consider the debate about terminology to be a closed debate and reserve the right to change terms as my understanding of culturally sensitive pedagogy and research evolves.

<sup>2</sup> All of which have happened to teachers of NA/AI literatures.

American Indians specifically, deserve a larger place at the multicultural table, not simply to add flavor, but for the substantive contributions they can make. For example, reading NA/AI literatures can engage students in critical thinking and help them develop argumentative skills when they consider questions such as these:

- How much background information is necessary to understand a work of NA/AI literature?
- How do my own reading filters help me or hinder me in approaching works by Native Americans/American Indians?
- How do elements of culture, including race, gender, and class influence our reading of these texts?
- Do we read these works using the conventions of European and American literature or do we need to develop a set of NA/AI literary conventions, and if so, what are they?
- How can reading these works help us expand our understanding of other literatures, our world, and ourselves?<sup>3</sup>

When students (and teachers) take on questions like these, they are broadening their personal “canon,” interrogating the ways they read, and considering multicultural texts in relation to each other—not merely in relation to traditional selections of the Western canon.

In this dissertation I hypothesize that reactions such as confusion and anger are due to an “understanding gap” that non-Native students have when encountering NA/AI literatures. This understanding gap has multiple dimensions, as the following vignette from my pilot study illustrates.

In a first-year writing course, after reading several short stories from Sherman Alexie’s *Lone Ranger and Tonto: Fistfight in Heaven* (Alexie, 1993), students viewed a clip from *Smoke Signals*, the film based on the novel.<sup>4</sup> The clip is called “Thomas Tells a Story,” and students were asked to compare their conception of the character, Thomas

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<sup>3</sup> These are the questions used in a first-year college composition course with a Native American/American Indian literatures focus. See Appendix 2 for syllabus.

<sup>4</sup> Alexie also wrote the screenplay (Alexie, 1998).

Builds-a-Fire, a storyteller, from the book with the portrayal of Thomas in the film.

Several students started talking at once—the general response was one of surprise:

“That is not at *all* how I pictured him!”

“Yeah, All nerdy!” (laughter)

“And what’s with those glasses?”

Several students commented on how the film portrayal of Thomas did not fit the image in their minds’ eyes. When asked what image they envisioned, they said, “Bigger,” “Deeper voice,” “More wise sounding,” and “Older.” A student, Steve<sup>5</sup>, said, “Did I miss something? Because I thought he was an old guy?” Steve, who is usually a very close reader, completely missed the many references in the book about Victor (the main character) and Thomas being the same age. It is as if Steve’s preconception, or stereotype, of the Indian storyteller as a wise, old man with a deep voice impeded his understanding of Thomas as a young man—a “nerdy” teenager with glasses—in Victor’s peer group.

This moment from class shows that an understanding gap can arise due to the intransigency of pre- or misconceptions that students hold about Native Americans/American Indians; in this case, the image of “old, wise Indian storyteller.”

Later in the class, Steve referred to elements of his personal reading filter that made it easier for him to relate to a Shakespearean play like *Romeo and Juliet* than Sherman Alexie’s short stories about life on the Spokane Indian reservation:

The reason I think that *Romeo and Juliet* is so easily relatable is that every single Story—well not every one—but there are so many things that happen in *Romeo and Juliet*, like the themes, and the way you have two split families, and someone’s got to [inaud] it’s like Disney all over... Like, I could name 40

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<sup>5</sup> Not his real name.

Disney movies that do that. So as a little kid, you're so in tune to that whole *Romeo and Juliet* concept – that's why I think it's so easily relatable. While this book, you wouldn't be able to get what you can without knowing all the Native American stuff.

This quote shows Steve's self-consciousness about his understanding gap, and his sense of how it originated—through the many stories of the dominant culture to which he was exposed as a child—and then predisposed him to appreciate canonical texts like *Romeo and Juliet* and miss obvious features of texts like *Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*. Steve's self-reflection reveals something of the extent of his understanding gap—highly cultural and longstanding. In the last sentence, Steve also mentions the issue of background information: “You wouldn't be able to get what you can without knowing all the Native American stuff.” Background information is an issue when it comes to making space in the canon for historically marginalized literatures, and especially for NA/AI literatures because of the multitude of individual cultural traditions under this umbrella term.

The understanding gap that students bring to the study of NA/AI literatures is not simply a deficit of knowledge, but—as Steve's reflection illustrated—tied to the cultural expectations that students bring to school. The understanding gap is also the result of the hegemonic structures of schools, where the presentation of mainstream culture and literature has taken precedence. The lack of understanding about marginalized cultures is something that teachers, as well as students, struggle with—not to mention researchers. Because whose literature gets taught in school is tied to power, those struggles with understanding can call into question a teachers' classroom authority and make us question the potential of culturally relevant pedagogy to bridge the understanding gap. In the following section, I will explore the layers of authority issues—from authority to even

publish Native American/American Indian stories to classroom authority to teach the works.

### ***The role of authority in the understanding gap***

There are many layers of authority to consider when it comes to thinking about the teaching and learning of NA/AI literatures. One layer is the authority to publish these works in the first place; in some cases tribal sovereignty, spiritual beliefs, or fear of being misread by non-Natives are at issue. Another layer is teacher authority: students may question the teacher's authority to teach the works, and this may come from a variety of positions. If there is a general agreement that a work should be published and students accept the teacher's authority to teach it, there are also questions of what kinds of positions it is acceptable for students and teachers to take in relation to the work. For example, do students and teachers have the authority to apply the literary conventions of the Western literary tradition to the works?

Very public debates about whether certain NA/AI stories should even be published, such as Athabaskan Indian objections to Velma Wallis's *Two Old Women* and Paula Gunn Allen's (1998) criticism of Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*, complicate the prospect of teaching these literatures.

*Two Old Women* is based on an oral story that Velma Wallis's (Gwich'in Athabaskan) mother told her. It is a story that has been passed down from mother to daughter for generations. The story is a compelling one. The two old women of the title are aging, and the chief decides to leave them behind when the band moves to a new camp because the band is struggling to survive. Despite their abandonment, the women thrive and eventually reunite with the band. Wallis encountered resistance from Native

presses when she tried to publish her book, and eventually published with the non-Native Epicenter Press. Once the book was out, it was criticized by Gwich'in leaders because of its "taboo" topic (Ramsey, 1999). Despite the book's huge sales in both paperback and hardback and it being awarded the 1993 Western States Book award, "Wallis' own community, whose reactions were for the most part represented by Gwich'in officials, expressed sentiments that they felt 'betrayed' and 'angry' with Wallis" (Ramsey, 1999; 25). Should a teacher teach a book that has not been authorized by the culture it represents?

Another example of who has authority to teach and publish Native works has to do with Paula Gunn Allen and Leslie Marmon Silko's *Ceremony*. One would think, that as a Laguna Pueblo Indian and prominent literary critic, Paula Gunn Allen, of all people, would have the authority to teach *Ceremony*, yet she finds it so "troublesome" that she "tends to non-teach it" (Allen, 1998). Her teaching approach is to focus on the story, including plot and action. She writes, "I read the novel quite differently from how it is read by many. I believe I could no more do (or sanction) the kind of ceremonial investigation of *Ceremony* done by some researchers than I could slit my mother's throat" (1998; 383). Allen tells two stories that call into question the authority of anyone, even Native Americans, to tell the stories of their tribal culture. One is her cousin, who wrote about her pueblo life as a school exercise and then was to do a book on Pueblo stories, "but before that project got well underway, she was called before the tribal council and told in no uncertain terms that she must not complete it. I remember being told a person who told those stories might wake up dead in a ditch somewhere" (Allen, 1998; 384). The other story Allen tells is of Ray Young Bear's attempt to collect

Mesquakie stories from his grandmother and other people. He was unable to because of the “idea of trying to keep a culture free of what would be called cultural contamination” (380). For the Mesquakie, “It would be easier just to forget the stories and not publish them at all. If one attempts to do that, they are risking their lives” (Allen, 1998; 380). Through these two anecdotes, Allen has called into question the appropriateness of even publishing certain stories, let alone teaching them. She explains the double ethical bind that teaching *Ceremony* put her in:

[S]atisfying my ethical concerns poses a serious ethical problem: pedagogically, I believe I should give specific information to students; discover and teach what the directions of Tayo’s movements mean, what constellations figure in the story and what their significance at Laguna is; what prayers, rituals, and spiritual activities occur at the Pueblo that have bearing on the novel; and how these elements propel the narrative and combine to form its overall significance.

Ethically, as a professor, I see this kind of methodology as necessary; but ethically, as an Indian, I can’t do it. (Allen, 1998; 385)

Allen’s ethical dilemma is larger than this particular novel and her identity as a teacher; it points to a basic contradiction between Western and Native epistemologies.

When works of NA/AI literatures are brought into the classroom, what systems of thought have authority in the way these works are discussed? Educators with a social justice vision may turn to pedagogical approaches like critical pedagogy to try to solve such ethical dilemmas. However, well-intentioned liberal educators taking a critical pedagogical approach may be disheartened to learn that Native theorists assert that even “critical pedagogies retain the deep structure of Western thought” (Grande, 2004; 3) and are not considered liberatory at all for Native American/American Indian people. In such a milieu, how can one avoid “cultural imperialism”? (Grande, 2004). Will taking a culturally relevant pedagogical approach immunize teachers from this possibility? Increasingly, teachers do find NA/AI texts on the approved curriculum and teaching

resources available through major presses (Susag, 1998). But for every resource, there is also a warning—to avoid “going Native” (Huhndorf, 2001) or “playing Indian” (P. Deloria, 1998).

It can be confusing for a teacher caught between wanting to open up a space to study NA/AI literatures and feeling trepidation about perpetuating stereotypes. Gary McLaughlin is one such teacher. He attended a 1994 National Council for Teachers of English (NCTE) workshop to gain “more resources and a better understanding of American Indian literature” (McLaughlin, 1997; 70) but left “confused” and “wondering if [he] was unintentionally creating or nurturing misunderstandings” (70). What McLaughlin was not confused about was the importance of letting Native Americans tell their own stories and the need to communicate to students “the folly of generalizing about Native Americans” (70). “When you approach the totality of ‘Native American Literature,’ you are confronted by an incredibly vast body of work . . . more than 400 different languages and distinct cultures” (Bruchac, 1994; 146). What McLaughlin did find confusing was the issue of appropriation, around which he sensed “a hard edge” and “a sort of warning” from the three presenters, two of whom were Native American (72). These messages from the presenters call into question his authority to teach the works the way he did.

At issue is the degree to which background information is necessary in the teaching of NA/AI literatures. McLaughlin questioned the presenters’ argument that “‘frontloading’ students with considerable background information about a writer’s tribe, customs, and beliefs was not only desirable, it was in fact necessary” (72), which he interpreted as placing “considerable obstacles between students and the texts they read”

(73). Paula Gunn Allen argues “that teaching a Native text without recourse to ethnographic as well as historical glossing is an exercise in obscurity, because texts, either derived from or directly connected to tradition, are firmly embedded within the matrix of their cultural base” (Allen, 1998; 379). In rebuttal to the objection that instructors do not have time to become experts on the Native American literature they teach, Wiget argues, “if we are to take this literature seriously, we must strive to supply ourselves and our students with sufficient content to make it intelligible on its own terms. We would do as much with *Beowulf* or *Medea* or not teach it at all” (Wiget, 2003; 2). When McLaughlin asked his students to weigh in on the issue, they said that some background information would be helpful, but they still wanted the freedom to choose which books to read. McLaughlin concludes: “What I have learned from my confusion is that I do need to address the limitations non-Native readers bring to this literature, but I do not need to let these limitations confine what my students choose to read” (74). Andrew Wiget adds an historical emphasis: one must “comprehend a general knowledge of Indian-white relations, yet substantially transcend it to focus on particular tribal cultures and literatures” (2). Like Wiget, Diane Long Hoeveler also advocates intensive grounding in cultural background; for example, she puts a heavy emphasis on learning about Native American cultural background in her six-week unit on Native American literature for secondary students. She also recognizes the difficulty of preparing to teach the literature: “Approaching the field in order to teach it can be a daunting prospect, simply because there is a wealth of fairly specialized material that is quite foreign to the average English teacher” (Hoeveler, 1988; 21).

If an educator does choose to teach NA/AI literatures, new layers of issues about authority emerge. It is not uncommon for students to challenge teachers' authority to teach the work. Historically, teacher authority has been based on traditional, legal-rational, and charismatic legitimacy (Weber, Henderson, & Parsons, 1947) or on professional legitimacy (Pace, 2003). Can particular approaches to authority act as a teacher affordance in helping students bridge their understanding gap in the study of NA/AI literatures? It is possible, but another layer of complexity in the teaching of NA/AI literatures is the lack of pedagogical infrastructure (to be explained in the following section), and this, too, can affect teacher authority.

### ***The role of pedagogical infrastructure in the understanding gap***

If we return to the vignette from the pilot project, an additional observation to make about Steve's reflection on how *Romeo and Juliet* is more "relatable" than a Native text is that his experience does not occur in isolation, but within the institution of schooling. Steve has some recognition that there is a consistency between his larger culture, as represented in Disney movies, and the textual choices in schools. This consistency, one manifestation of which can be called cultural capital (Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993), allowed Steve to excel at the study of canonical texts, such as those of Shakespeare, but falter in the study of NA/AI literatures. In this sense, schooling, as an institution, reproduces (Parsons, 1959) a society that understands, and therefore values, Shakespeare and does not understand (and therefore does not value) NA/AI literatures. In other words, the institution of schooling functions as an Ideological State Apparatus (ISA). ISAs "function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated

and concealed, even symbolic” (Althusser, 1971; 145). In order for the institution of schooling to function in this way, pedagogical theory has to support this privileging of certain kinds of cultural capital and ideology.

When white, middle class, female English teachers<sup>6</sup> approach teaching a canonical text like Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, there is what I will call a “pedagogical infrastructure” that supports the process. For example, teachers most likely studied *Macbeth* in their own schooling, so they have had a chance to read it in a community and see it taught. They also may have seen the play performed, either live on stage at one of the many summer Shakespeare festivals throughout the country, or on DVD. Also, the text is frequently on school curricula, so teachers expect to find a sufficient number of copies of the text in English department bookrooms. If they need additional copies, administrators most likely would grant the expenditure without argument (who wants to be accused of withholding Shakespeare from American students?).

We should not underestimate the power of availability. Dave Winters’ study of curriculum shows that new teachers have traditionally been guided in their pedagogical choices by the literature anthologies available at their schools. In fact, Winters says, “At least for a time, the anthology, for all intents and purposes, *was* American literature” (2001; 36). I should note that these anthologies did not include any NA/AI literatures. The power of anthologies and their relation to the canon is still at issue today, as evidenced by a December 2007 *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, which argues that, while the Norton anthology has been considered the gold standard for eons, the Longman

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<sup>6</sup> Proportionately, the percentage of white teachers far outnumbers the percentage of white students in schools. Even on Native American reservations, nearly 70% of the teaching force is white (Jacobs, 2003; 157).

anthology is starting to take some of the market share. What Longman does differently, according to the publication's founding editor, David Damrosch, is to provide a greater diversity of works, and "from the start, we've been doing a lot more with cultural context, which they're [Norton] starting to catch up to." In contrast, the Norton editor, Stephen Greenblatt, asserts that "he's constitutionally opposed to the idea of 'background material'" (Howard, 2007; A11). Background material is less important with canonical works because of the pedagogical infrastructure that already supports them.

In addition to availability of books, another facet of what I am calling pedagogical infrastructure involves teachers being able to call on the expertise of their colleagues when preparing to teach canonical works like *Romeo and Juliet* or *Macbeth*. In addition, there are a multitude of unit plans, specially annotated books, and other resources connected to *Macbeth* that are readily available. This internal network of support helps ensure that what is in the canon—and therefore on school curricula—gets taught and gets taught well. In this sense, curriculum itself is reproductive, and it does so not only in the hands of white female teachers. The African American teacher in my study, Liz Turner,<sup>7</sup> also clearly felt more at ease teaching Shakespeare than she did teaching a work of NA/AI literature. The pedagogical infrastructure also functions as a repression of alternative pedagogical approaches, but this repression is so concealed—just as Althusser suggests—that most teachers are unaware of it.

What I am calling a pedagogical infrastructure is one of the means by which schools can function as an Ideological State Apparatus, and a consistency between the cultural capital of the larger society and that of schools makes for smoother functioning of this apparatus and a maintenance of concealed repression of other approaches.

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<sup>7</sup> A pseudonym

Consequently, teachers of the dominant culture who teach NA/AI literatures must confront their own cultural practices and the power associated with these practices. Henry Giroux argues that “...the dominant culture and its attendant literacy approaches do not simply teach the mechanics of reading and writing; they also teach people how to live passively amidst alienating structures” (Giroux & Purpel, 1983; 227). Hence, the common response to the question I pose to high school teachers I meet about whether they teach NA/AI literatures: “Well...I should, but...” or “I have been meaning to, but...”

Pedagogical infrastructure is closely tied to Bourdieu’s notion of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977) and helps us understand why Native American culture—and the language and cultures of other culturally dominated people—are often disregarded in schools:

Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of *cultural capital* . . . postulates that because schools primarily reflect the knowledge and values of economically and culturally dominant groups in society, they validate and reinforce the cultural capital that students from such groups already bring from home. This validation takes place through the overt and covert curriculum and the school climate. According to Bourdieu, the confirmation of the dominant culture’s supremacy results in a *symbolic violence* against groups that are devalued. The cultural model held up for all is not within easy reach of all, and only token numbers of students from less-valued groups can achieve it. If they learn and take on this cultural capital—abandoning their own culture, language, and values—they may succeed. In this way, although few students from dominated groups are permitted to succeed, the myth of meritocracy is maintained. (Nieto, 2008; 322)

Classroom teachers and students, engaged in classroom discourse live “naturally in ideology” (Althusser, 1971; 171), and when this ideology is challenged, students may express the unnaturalness of this challenge. For instance, when they read an Athabaskan oral narrative with a very clear point, yet characterize it as “pointless.” In such a situation, perhaps students are aware of their constitution as ideological subjects, and

perhaps their confusion or anger arises because they feel they are being constituted in an ideology that is not natural to them.

Considering the role of ideology undergirding pedagogical infrastructure in the classroom is important when analyzing the discourse of a student like Steve. In addition to the layers of complexity in authority and pedagogical infrastructure, another dimension of addressing the understanding gap is Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP).

Approaching the study of NA/AI literatures from a culturally relevant approach, then, may help students and teachers recognize the circulation of culture and power attendant in their own literacy practices and lead to insights, and to an understanding of insights, like Steve's.

### ***Culturally relevant pedagogy***

Culturally relevant pedagogy is based on positive beliefs about the cultural heritages of Native, African, Latino, and Asian American students (Gay, 2000). As such, it appears to have potential for addressing the understanding gap that non-Native students bring to the study of NA/AI literatures. However, as was seen in the discussions of authority and pedagogical infrastructure, it takes more than “positive beliefs” to negotiate the complexity surrounding the teaching of NA/AI literatures. As Native scholar Sandy Grande points out:

The aims and imperatives of American Indian education not only illuminate the deep deficiency of off-the-shelf brands of multiculturalism, which espouse the empty rhetoric of “respecting differences” and market synthetic pedagogies that reduce culture to the celebration of food, fad, and festivals, but also point to the relevance and necessity of critical pedagogies of indigenous education. (Grande, 2004; 26)

Given what Grande is calling for, it is important to think critically about culturally relevant pedagogy to determine whether it is yet another reductive “synthetic pedagogy,”

or whether it holds potential to explicate the layers of complexity I have described as inherent in the enterprise of teaching NA/AI literatures. Culturally responsive teaching, in its broadest sense, does the following:

[S]imultaneously develops, along with academic achievement, social consciousness and critique, cultural affirmation, competence, and exchange; community building and personal connections; individual self worth and abilities; and an ethic of caring. It uses ways of knowing, understanding, and representing various ethnic and cultural groups in teaching academic subjects, processes, and skills. It cultivates cooperation, collaboration, reciprocity, and mutual responsibility for learning among students and between students and teachers. (Gay, 2000; 43)

Geneva Gay's theory of culturally relevant pedagogy is comprehensive; only by reducing it to one or two parts, such as "cultural affirmation," could it be enacted as merely a "celebration of food, fad, and festivals," and certain aspects of it are particularly useful in approaching NA/AI literatures.

When it comes to NA/AI literatures, valuing cultural strengths is an especially important part of the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy. While Gay emphasizes that the different dimensions of her theory work "simultaneously," I argue that when it comes to the teaching of NA/AI literatures, three areas in particular—holding high standards, valuing language, and valuing community—work holistically to bridge the understanding gap. Holding high standards is important for validating the rightful place of NA/AI literatures in the curriculum. If teachers do not choose challenging assignments and classroom activities to go along with these works, then students will quickly learn to devalue them and see NA/AI units as extraneous to the curriculum. Furthermore, high standards for both Native and non-Native students is a part of an equitable school system.

Valuing language and community go together. Valuing them serves as a positive model for all students in the classroom, showing that all languages and cultures are

affirmed by schools, and it is also part of a social justice enterprise that seeks to bring about equity in schools. Greater success in holding high standards, valuing language and valuing community can be achieved by adopting an ethic of caring between students and teachers. The part of culturally relevant pedagogy that Gay calls “social consciousness and critique” can be strengthened by bringing in elements of critical pedagogy and what Sandy Grande calls “red pedagogy,” which is a way of valuing cultural strengths.

### **Valuing cultural strengths**

In a culturally relevant pedagogical approach, teachers “increase the classroom participation and academic achievement of students from different ethnic groups by modifying instruction so that it draws upon cultural strengths” (Banks, 2006; 197). An example of these positive beliefs is Yupik elder Oscar Kawagley’s proposition that “it is possible to teach Native youth mathematics and . . . sciences by capitalizing on the Native knowledge and skills that already exist in their culture (Kawagley, 1990; 13). Similarly, culturally responsive teachers “understand and appreciate students’ personal cultural knowledge and use their students’ prior knowledge and culture in teaching by constructing and designing relevant cultural metaphors and images in an effort to bridge the gap between what students know and appreciate and new knowledge or concepts to be mastered” (Irvine, 2003; 68). The valuing of cultural strengths is one of the common attributes across Osborne’s<sup>8</sup> synthesis of more than 70 interpretive ethnographies of classrooms: “It is desirable to teach content that is culturally relevant to students’ previous experiences, that fosters their natal cultural identity, and that empowers them with knowledge and practices to operate successfully in mainstream society” (Osborne,

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<sup>8</sup> Osborne found nine assertions about culturally relevant pedagogy that were common across his review of over 70 interpretive ethnographies of classrooms. See Appendix 17 for a complete list.

1996; 292). The culturally responsive educator has a “thorough *knowledge* about the cultural values, learning styles, historical legacies, contributions, and achievements of different ethnic groups” (Gay, 2000; 44). An example could be the use of “the lyrics of rap songs as a way to teach elements of poetry” (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 476).

Valuing cultural strengths is a complex endeavor, so I will talk about three aforementioned key aspects of it separately: valuing cultural strengths includes holding high standards, valuing language, and valuing the cultural strengths of a community—all aspects of culturally relevant pedagogy.

### ***Valuing cultural strengths includes holding high standards***

It is important to note, as this assertion illustrates, that valuing cultural strengths does not come at the cost of school success. Likewise, Ladson-Billings’ theoretical model of culturally responsive pedagogy “not only addresses student achievement, but also helps students accept and affirm their cultural identity” (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 469). Culturally relevant teachers demand that all students “be critical thinkers and problem solvers, not merely students who have mastered minimum competencies in the basic skills” (Irvine, 1992; 81). This same marrying of high standards to cultural responsiveness is seen in Standard B.2 of Alaska Standards for culturally responsive educators: “utilize traditional settings such as camps as learning environments for transmitting both cultural and academic knowledge and skills” (Network, 1998). Culturally responsive educators should exhibit “the *tenacity* to relentlessly pursue comprehensive and high level performance for children who are currently underachieving in schools” (Gay, 2000; 44). Holding high standards does not come at the cost of students’ home cultures. Teachers should attend to the cultural experiences and the

needs inherent in those experiences (Irvine, 1992). One way to give this attention is to value language.

### ***Valuing language***

Culturally congruent practices, such as using language patterns similar to students' home language patterns are part of culturally relevant pedagogy (Erickson, 1981). Osborne's study (1996) also found inclusion of students' first languages in the school program and in classroom interactions to be a common feature of culturally responsive pedagogy. Master teacher Jaime Escalante, who achieved superlative results teaching his Hispanic students advanced mathematics, used slang and dialect in his classroom as part of his effective teaching strategy. A culturally relevant approach refers to "a more dynamic or synergistic relationship between home/community culture and school culture" than is possible with a culturally congruent approach, which may "connote accommodation of student culture to mainstream culture" (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 467). Valuing students' home languages precludes an accommodationist or assimilationist approach.

### ***Valuing cultural strengths of the community***

By considering the larger community in addition to the home environment, as Ladson-Billings suggests, it becomes less likely that pedagogical strategies will be taken out of context and applied for further oppression, rather than for liberation. The Alaska Native organizations in the state of Alaska did just that—considering the larger community, as well as the home environment—when they came together and produced a vision of culturally responsive schools that includes cultural standards for students, educators, schools, curriculum, and communities.<sup>9</sup> Some of the standards for culturally

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<sup>9</sup> These standards were published in the wake of the state of Alaska's content standards and performance standards, by which students in that state were to be tested in high-stakes benchmark exams and an exit

responsive educators (see Appendix 16) are part of the definition of culturally relevant pedagogy I wish to build on because by shifting the focus from “teaching/learning *about* cultural heritage as another subject to teaching/learning *through* the local culture as a foundation for all education it is intended that all forms of knowledge, ways of knowing and world views be recognized as equally valid, adaptable and complementary to one another in mutually beneficial ways” (Network, 1998). Kim Price’s experience teaching English in Tununuk, Alaska is an example of just such a move.

Price spent three years living in the village of Tununuk “before attempting a unit on the portrayal of people of the North in literature” (Price, 2003; 48). She first gained a general sense of the culture: “Learning about and becoming a part of the community were essential aspects of becoming a teacher in this village” (42). Price was able to learn about the cultural background of the village through observation, rather than reading books: “[W]atching the elders model traditional crafts and activities while interacting with and quietly correcting the students during Yup’ik studies classes has allowed me to see firsthand how the children are naturally instructed” (47).

Of course, not every educator has the opportunity to be immersed in an indigenous culture before teaching its literature, but Price’s account is a call to take a more proactive approach to educating oneself about the culture of the Native literatures one is teaching. This could mean inviting elders into the classroom, consulting with tribal groups, and generally doing more research prior to beginning to teach. A teacher who has

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exam. The authors of the standards for culturally responsive schools state, “to the extent that these state standards are written for general use throughout Alaska, they don’t always address some of the special issues that are of critical importance to schools in rural Alaska, particularly those serving Alaska Native communities and students” (Preface).

done this kind of preparation has worked significantly to try to bridge his or her own understanding gap and is better positioned to help students bridge theirs.

### **A synergistic approach**

In the previous section I discussed three ways of valuing cultural strengths-- holding high standards, valuing language, and valuing the strengths of the community— as part of a culturally relevant pedagogical approach when teaching NA/AI literatures, an approach that may mediate the lack of pedagogical infrastructure and address some of the problems seen in the literature. However, culturally relevant theorists advocate a holistic approach to these elements. It is not through any single technique that a culturally responsive teacher shows that he or she values students’ cultures, but through the synergy of multiple techniques. Native writer Gerald Vizenor (1999) satirizes what can happen when educators pick up on a single strategy to show cultural understanding. At Park Rapids High School he had invited a native educator to meet with the staff and “she told them that Indians ‘do not touch each other’” (xi). He goes on to write, “Many teachers embraced the ‘no touch’ notion to answer an apparent Indian reticence in public school, and the rest is manifest manners” (xi).<sup>10</sup> By being too single-minded in one’s approach to culturally relevant pedagogy, it is possible to do more harm than good, as the example above illustrates. While taking a synergistic approach, maintaining an ethic of caring is necessary.

### **Enacting an ethic of caring**

When it comes to the teaching of NA/AI literatures, the three areas I’ve just discussed—holding high standards, valuing language, and valuing community—have the

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<sup>10</sup> “Manifest Manners” is a set of attitudes that perpetuate oppression of American Indians. Vizenor uses a postmodern approach and trickster humor to theorize the concept of manifest manners.

potential to work holistically to bridge the understanding gap. Central to this holistic work is the adoption of an ethic of caring and personal accountability. The ethic of caring is one of Collins' four propositions guiding her work on Black feminist thought, and it has been taken up by Ladson-Billings as part of her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. Australian researcher Osborne noted that a common feature in his study was that "culturally relevant teachers are personally warm toward and respectful of, as well as academically demanding of, all students." (Osborne, 1996; 296). Like the valuing of cultural strengths, an ethic of caring does not preclude high academic standards.

### **Fostering social critique**

Fostering social critique is an important feature of culturally relevant pedagogy. Paulo Freire's notion of teaching for social justice and liberation informs culturally relevant pedagogy, but for Native intellectuals, this is not enough: "as Indigenous people our strategies for decolonization and empowerment are in some ways necessarily markedly different" (Wilson, 2004). For example, a respect for the culture of nonhuman relatives as well as humans is a part of these strategies (Wilson, 2004; 70). Another concern for American Indian teachers and scholars is that social consciousness involves active strategies of decolonization. "Teachers who teach in culturally relevant ways spell out the cultural assumptions on which the classroom (and schooling) operate" (Osborne, 1996; 298). Presuming that teachers understand social inequalities and their causes, they should "help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities" (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 476). Culturally relevant teachers recognize that "Racism is prevalent in schools and needs to be addressed" (Osborne, 1996; 304). They have "the *will* to confront prevailing educational canons and convictions and to rethink traditional

assumptions of cultural universality and/or neutrality in teaching and learning” (Gay, 2000; 44). For this kind of social critique to have lasting change, however, one must move from considering personal convictions to the political.

### **Critical pedagogy**

The teaching and learning of literature from the margins is a political act, a re-directing of the ideological state apparatus of schooling, and one in which, as critical pedagogue Joe Kincheloe says, a teacher enacts his or her agency within an ideological system that supports dominant forms of power (2007). Freire’s notion of liberatory teaching can be applied to teaching non-dominant works such as NA/AI literatures, and both the choice of text (as I saw with my Athabaskan students’ positive response to an Athabaskan text) and a Freirian pedagogical approach can have an empowering effect for Native American students. This concern for Freirian notions of social justice and equality has led many teachers to take on the teaching of NA/AI literatures. Critical pedagogical theory is important to the project of theorizing a useful pedagogical approach to NA/AI literatures with the aim of closing the achievement gap for Native American students and the understanding gap for non-Native students, a project very much concerned with social justice and freedom, one of the concerns of critical pedagogy that originated with Paolo Freire (1993) and has continued in the work of Henry Giroux (1983), Michael Apple (1990), bell hooks (1994), and others (Kincheloe, 2004). Given the constraints of teaching NA/AI literatures within the context of the Ideological State Apparatus of Schooling and the deep cultural conditioning of students such as Steve, critical pedagogy is a useful theoretical lens for studying the understanding gap of non-Native students when they approach NA/AI literatures.

While both critical pedagogy and culturally relevant pedagogy are general approaches aimed at fostering social critique, my goal is to make the work of Native scholars and theorists central to my discussion, and that is where “red pedagogy” (Grande, 2004) comes in.

## **Red pedagogy**

The problem with critical pedagogy for Native peoples is that “Against the immediate needs and political urgencies of their own communities, engagement in abstract theory seems indulgent—a luxury and privilege of the academic elite” (Grande, 2007). Grande asserts that “teachers, schools, and Western frames of intelligibility still desire to ‘kill the Indian and save the man’ and that Native America is not only a place but also a social, political, cultural and economic space” (5). In theorizing a red pedagogy that problematizes critical pedagogy, Grande seeks to “extend the spaces of indigenous intellectualism” (5) while building coalitions with multiple groups, but the primary goal of red pedagogy is decolonization (166). Similar to feminists who critique critical pedagogy as a white male discourse, Grande criticizes it as insufficient for indigenous people. Revolutionary critical pedagogy holds more promise because of its “conception of culture as conditioned by material forces and of schooling as a site of struggle” (26) but ultimately, she advocates moving to a “red pedagogy.” While red pedagogy “privileges ‘revolutionary critical pedagogy’ as a mode of inquiry, it does not simply appropriate or absorb its language and epistemic frames, but rather employs its vision as one of many starting points for rethinking indigenous praxis” (28). Red pedagogy is also based in hope, “not the future-centered hope of the Western imagination, but rather a hope that lives in contingency with the past—one that trusts the beliefs and understanding

of our ancestors as well as the power of traditional knowledge” (28). Traditional knowledge varies from Western thinking in significant ways. To get at this, Grande identifies the “Deep Structures of the Colonialist Consciousness”:

- 1) Belief in progress as change and change as progress
- 2) Belief in the effective separateness of faith and reason
- 3) Belief in the essential quality of the universe and of “reality” as impersonal, secular, material, mechanistic, and relativistic
- 4) Subscription to ontological individualism
- 5) Belief in human beings as separate from and superior to the rest of nature (69-70)

In her chapter on “Red Land, White Power” Grande presents the current and ongoing struggle for sovereignty and argues that it constitutes an “imperative for educators to develop pedagogical interventions that can inform indigenous struggles against colonialist forces that are determined to consume their lands and resources” (80). In this statement, we have a powerful justification for addressing social justice through pedagogy. Grande’s ideas have recently been taken up by Malott (2008) who states,

[I]t is my belief that the global movement against human suffering . . . can best be served by a complex theory informed by the invaluable insights of not just critical theory, that is, counter-hegemonic Western knowledge, but Indigenous knowledge as well. In other words, combining Western-based counter-hegemonic and Indigenous knowledges, in my view, offers the most powerful insights informing an educational practice against capitalism and its attendant hegemonies such as white supremacy, homophobia, and patriarchy. (14)

I agree with Malott’s incarnation of critical pedagogy and find that the longer I work on this project the more appropriate it seems to incorporate indigenous ways of knowing, such as valuing stories for “teachings.”<sup>11</sup> I argue that a study of *Wynema*, with its critique of the Dawes Act—which Grande calls “the single most destructive U.S. policy” (97)—

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<sup>11</sup> I use the term “teachings” as Tedlock and Tedlock do in *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy* (1975). The first mention of “teachings” in the book comes up in the narrative of an exchange between a boy and a Navajo elder. Tedlock explains, “It would not have been the Indian way for the old man to have given the schoolboy a lecture about the true meaning of the story then and there, although he clearly could have. The proper exegesis of the story, if it comes, can only come from the boy’s own experiences in life” (xx).

has the potential for the kind of intervention Grande envisions in that it deals with ongoing Native issues, such as sovereignty.

### **Issues raised by *Wynema***

*Wynema: Child of the Forest*, (Callahan, 1891) is considered the first novel by a woman of Native American/American Indian descent: S. Alice Callahan. The title character of the novel, Wynema, (Ruoff, 1997) is a precocious Indian girl who begs her father to let her attend school. He refuses to send her to the mission school, run by Gerald Keithly, and instead requests that a school be built in their village. Gerald sends a teacher to this school, Genevieve Weir. Wynema is a model student, eventually becoming a co-teacher and traveling to Genevieve's home where she meets and falls in love with Robin Weir, Genevieve's brother. Disagreement between Genevieve and her fiancé, Maurice Mauran over allotment (The Dawes Act) leads to her ending the engagement and returning to Wynema's village where she accepts Keithly's proposal. A double marriage ensues: Wynema marries Robin, and Genevieve marries Gerard Keithly. But this double marriage, usually a device for ending a novel, occurs early, with nearly one-third of the novel still to come. The final portion of the book concerns Indian land rights, an issue dealt with not only through discussion of allotment, but also through the first<sup>12</sup> fictional re-telling of the Wounded Knee massacre.

To draw her white audience into the novel so that she can engage them in these issues, Callahan employs stereotypes, romanticized language, and white concepts of Indian space. White stereotypes of Muscogee Creek Indians in particular, and Native

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<sup>12</sup> Lisa Tatonetti points out that the massacre took place just six months before Callahan published *Wynema*. "Behind the Shadows of Wounded Knee: The Slippage of Imagination in *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*." *Studies in American Indian Literatures*. 16.1 (Spring 2004): 1.

Americans in general, both from the time the novel was published and continuing today, include the “noble savage,” the “Indian Princess,” and the idyllic, yet primitive, Indian teepee village. Wynema is called a “little savage,” and those of her tribe are called “happy peaceable Indians” who dream of the “happy hunting-grounds beyond.” As the novel begins, Callahan sets the scene through this stereotypical description of the Indian village space:

In an obscure place, miles from the nearest trading point, in a teepee, dwelt the parents of our heroine when she first saw the light. All around and about them stood the teepees of their people, and surrounding the village of tents was the great, dark, cool forest in which the men, the “bucks,” spent many hours of the day in hunting, or fishing in the river that flowed peacefully along in the midst of the wood. (1)

Callahan’s choice to house her heroine in a teepee is clearly an imitation of white misconceptions of Indian village space. The teepee is a powerful image in the white imagination, and the mobility of the teepee is key in white’s seeing Indian villages as moveable. In fact, Muscogee people, unlike the Plains Indians, did not live in teepees, but in huts roofed with grass and wood (Ramaker, 2005) and “relatively nucleated towns situated adjacent to the rivers and creeks” (Foster, 2004; 65). Callahan, who lived in Indian territory, and had a father who was “very active” in Muscogee tribal issues, would surely have been aware of the dwellings and town arrangements of Muscogee Creek Indians, so we might surmise that this description of the setting is a deliberate move on her part to draw white readers into her novel.

In attempting to research *through* culture rather than *about* culture, one must listen carefully to Native scholars, and Craig Womack (Muscogee Creek) is one of them. In this book *Red on Red: Native American Literary Separatism* (Womack, 1999), he criticizes *Wynema* for its “failure to engage Creek culture, history, and politics” (107).

Womack's criticisms are insightful, and I would recommend his chapter on *Wynema*, not as a kind of optional, enriching piece of background information, but as a mandatory critical lens for discussing the novel. One of his criticisms is that the Creek characters "never get a chance to speak on behalf of their culture" (111), and when they do, it is only to espouse white views. In fact, he calls the title character, "a star pupil with straight As in whiteness" (108). That may very well be, but it is also true that in the world *Wynema* lived in, it is the star pupil whose voice can be heard by the greatest number of whites. Callahan herself, like *Wynema*, was a "star pupil," who went on to become a teacher. Publishing *Wynema* at the age of 23 is a remarkable accomplishment, especially considering the time period, with its blatant racism and lack of opportunity for American Indians, as well as for women.

Another important criticism of *Wynema* is that it expresses sympathy for Creeks as victims and "The problem with this reasoning as with many other depictions of Native Americans that place Indian people in tragic frameworks, is that it completely ignores the active and successful resistance of Creek traditionalist groups such as the so-called Snakes who refuse to acknowledge the dissolution of tribal government and the illegal state of Oklahoma" (Womack, 1999; 118).

With its obvious stereotypes, didactic passages on Indian rights, and sentimental prose, the novel poses particular challenges for readers, especially high school students who may not have read many (if any) works of NA/AI literatures before. There is the danger that the stereotypes could be taken at face value—a manifestation of the kind of understanding gap discussed earlier—rather than analyzed for their subversive potential to gain access to white readers or for the possibility that they may exemplify

assimilationist attitudes adopted by the author during her own education. However, with a culturally relevant approach that also incorporates the more radical aims of red pedagogy, there is the potential for a skilled teacher to lead a nuanced discussion that helps students overcome their understanding gap to see the complexity of rhetorical devices used by a Muscogee Creek Indian like Callahan.

### ***How this dissertation addresses the issues of teaching Native American/American Indian literatures***

Given the problematic and complex representation of the teaching of NA/AI texts in the literature, the need for teachers and students to deal with an “understanding gap,” the potential for challenges to authority—both the authority of the teacher and of the authors—all of which is hampered by a lack of pedagogical infrastructure that impedes teacher access to the necessary cultural background knowledge to contextualize NA/AI work, a comprehensive theoretical frame is needed for research in this area. This introduction has explored the affordances of culturally relevant pedagogy, critical pedagogy, and red pedagogy for teaching NA/AI literatures, and concepts from these theories may have the potential to guide research as well. Qualifying my approach with “may have” is important because the history of research about Native issues in the academy has sometimes been fraught with damaging agendas and oppressive outcomes for Native people (Vizenor, 1969; Mihesuah and Wilson, 2004).

This dissertation spans the disciplinary areas of education, composition, and literature, and in so doing makes an argument for an interdisciplinary approach to describe classroom interactions among students and teachers reading NA/AI literatures. Just as the elements of culturally relevant pedagogy should be engaged synergistically (Gay, 2000), I argue that culturally relevant research—of which this dissertation may be a

prototype—should also be undertaken holistically. To narrow the view of the research to just one discipline or one theoretical or methodological approach risks committing at the level of research what Vizenor describes at the level of teaching—taking one observation (the no-touch rule mentioned earlier in this chapter) and making that the focus of one’s work. To represent the nuances of teaching NA/AI literatures, I will look at Liz Turner’s classroom through multiple frames.

Given the potential damage that can be done by researching NA/AI literatures, this dissertation pays careful attention to methodology, explained in Chapter Two: “Methodology: When Reciprocity, Respect, Friendship, and Responsibility Lead to a Critical Discourse and Spatial Analysis of Race in the Classroom.” In this chapter, I give an overview of my research site and participants, the context of the classroom, which includes struggles with race issues. I then identify the phases of the project, detailing the kind of data collection and activities in each phase. Next, I deal with four influences on my methodological choices—reciprocity, respect, friendship, and responsibility. An explanation follows of how a Grounded Theory approach led to culturally relevant discourse analysis, and then narrowed to critical discourse analysis as the research questions came to include issues of race. I show how spatial analysis is layered on discourse analysis to give a rich view of how silence operates powerfully in the segregation of the classroom. Finally, I demonstrate these methods on a section of transcript.

Authority is explored in Chapter Three: “Authority as a Potential Teacher Affordance in Bridging the Understand Gap of Non-Native Students.” In this chapter I show how authority became a salient issue on the “powder keg” day—the day that

students were reading the introduction aloud and a group of white male students began to challenge the female, African American teacher's authority. The incident was so painful that the teacher, Liz Turner, almost decided to put away the Native American text and teach another book. She cited friendship with the researcher as one reason she persevered. Authority cropped up again explicitly on the "privilege walk"<sup>13</sup> day, leading me to compare the way the teacher enacted authority on this day with the ways in which she enacted it over the semester as a whole. Furthermore, I consider the significance of the crisis of authority occurring during a Native American literatures unit. Finally, I posit that Liz Turner's complex and, at times, ambivalent enactment of authority may have helped students bridge their understanding gap about NA/AI literatures.

In this chapter, I address questions of privilege after exploring the nature of classroom authority generally and coming to some definitions of authority and power. Liz Turner's enactment of her authority as a public school teacher, as an African American woman, as someone with Native American ancestry, as someone who grew up in a lower class urban environment, and as a doctoral student/budding researcher is complex and relevant to student understanding about Native American issues and about students' own racial and cultural identities. The teacher tapped into a complex array of sources of legitimacy—of which cultural legitimacy is most notable—to enact her authority during the Native American unit.

In Chapter Four: "Spatial and Discursive Analysis of the Classroom," I take a stance of social critique to describe changes in spatial positioning in the classroom, comparing how classroom space was being used during the NA/AI literatures unit with

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<sup>13</sup> An activity that guides students to consider how race, class, gender, and sexual orientation affect privilege in our society.

how it was typically used by these particular students and this particular teacher. I noticed a correlation between spatial and discursive changes in the classroom during the Native American unit. To address these issues, I considered some of the same data—field notes, videotapes, and written student reflections—in different ways. For example, I focused more on a visual analysis of the videotapes and looked for moments of convergence and divergence between the visual analysis and more traditional discourse analysis.

There were several indicators that one particular day in the semester, the day the class participated in a “privilege walk,” was transformative for those involved. For example, students felt that the activity made visible the racial differences in the classroom, the teacher repeatedly referred to the activity as “healing,” and, as a researcher, I noticed that students who spoke less in the class—five African American girls—spoke up during the privilege walk about their difficult life experiences, and they continued to increase their verbal participation in class from that day forward. Indicators such as these led me to focus on this particular event in my data and radiate my analysis both backward and forward from that day, paying attention to space and discourse, especially in relation to race and culture.

I expand on the ethic of care to include listening and friendship in Chapter Five: “‘If you weren’t researching me and a friend . . .’ Problematizing Friendship as Method and Applying Rhetorical Listening.” One of the challenges of pursuing friendship as method is deciding how to analyze data that looks very much like everyday conversations. In a theorization of “friendship as method,” (Tillman-Healy, 2003) the researcher’s “primary procedures are those we use to build and sustain friendship:

conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability” (734). Furthermore, “we research with an ethic of friendship, a stance of hope, caring, justice, even love” (735). Using these procedures as my codes, I found a great deal of data in these areas, but also some data outside of these areas, such as protection, helping, and mentoring. Most important, I demonstrate that there are potential liabilities of friendship as method, for which rhetorical listening offers some mediation. The use of listening in friendship as method was a factor in maintaining a critical approach throughout the project.

In the conclusion I reconsider methodology, authority, space, and friendship through a culturally relevant pedagogical lens and formulate a theory for culturally relevant research with the goal of closing the understanding gap for non-Native students who are studying NA/AI literatures and moving toward greater equity and social justice for all students. I address how the following features of culturally relevant pedagogy have been manifested in the teaching practice of Liz Turner and hypothesize how a theory of culturally relevant research arises from these observations: valuing cultural strengths, enacting an ethic of caring, fostering social critique, and self-reflection.

### ***Contribution of this work***

I hope to offer a way out of the confusion surrounding the teaching of NA/AI literatures as described by McLaughlin and others. In analyzing Liz Turner’s classroom, it would seem that the way *out* appears to be *through*. That is, when courageous educators and students are willing to take a risk to explore the white privilege and racism that influence their classrooms, there is a potential to narrow the understanding gap of non-Native students. This work offers one of the few empirical studies on pedagogical approaches to

Native American literatures, and it takes the unusual perspective of focusing on non-Native students. Methodologically, this study makes a new contribution to data analysis in that it shows how critical discourse analysis can be layered with what I am calling critical spatial analysis to gain a deeper understanding of classroom dynamics.

Furthermore, the success of the particular teacher in this study in helping students narrow their understanding gap rests partly on her use of what I am calling cultural legitimacy to bolster her authority. That is, she begins speaking from the footing of a member of an oppressed group (African American women) to help students understand the issues of another oppressed group (Native Americans/American Indians). This move on the teacher's part expands our understanding of teacher affordances in culturally relevant pedagogy. Another methodological contribution is the particular way in which friendship as method is enacted, with the use of rhetorical listening to shape the inquiry and negotiate conflicts.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Methodology: When Reciprocity, Respect, Friendship, and Responsibility Lead to a Critical Discourse and Spatial Analysis of Race in the Classroom**

*The silenced are not just incidental to the curiosity of the researcher, but are the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world. In this context, research becomes a means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim the world.*

*–Paulo Freire*

In the introduction I laid out the complexity of the endeavor of teaching Native American/American Indian (NA/AI) literatures, positing the understanding gap of non-Native students and teachers as an area for intervention. Considering the cultural nature of the understanding gap, issues of authority and the pedagogical infrastructure that is lacking, a culturally relevant pedagogical approach offers several possibilities for bridging the gap, keeping in mind the critique of Native theorist Sandy Grande (2004) that we must transcend rhetorically empty notions of respecting differences. It follows that the most robust vision of culturally relevant pedagogy holds the best potential for successfully teaching NA/AI literatures: valuing cultural strengths, which includes holding high standards, valuing language, and valuing the cultural strengths of a community, as well as fostering social critique. To this definition of culturally relevant pedagogy, I add that the teaching of Native American/American Indian literatures, with its high demand for cultural background information, requires an engagement in self-

reflection about the degree to which it is meeting the other goals of culturally relevant pedagogy. Because schools can function as ideological state apparatuses (Althusser, 1971) that reinforce the hegemony of the mainstream American society, a culturally relevant approach should be infused with a critical pedagogical approach. Joe Kincheloe explains how critical pedagogy serves the challenges of ISAs such as schools:

Advocates of critical pedagogy are aware that every minute of every hour that teachers teach, they are faced with complex decisions concerning justice, democracy, and competing ethical claims. While they have to make individual determinations of what to do in these particular circumstances, they must concurrently deal with what John Goodlad (1994) calls the surrounding institutional morality. A central tenet of critical pedagogy maintains that the classroom, curricular, school structures teachers enter are not neutral sites waiting to be shaped by educational professionals. While such professionals do possess agency, this prerogative is not completely free and independent of decisions made previously by people operating with different values and shaped by the ideologies and cultural assumptions of their historical contexts. These contexts are shaped in the same ways language and knowledge are constructed, as historical power makes particular practices seem natural—as if they could have been constructed in no other way. (Kincheloe, 2008; 1-2)

Furthermore, any study of the teaching of American Indian issues must take seriously the claims of Native theorists that critical pedagogy “retains the deep structure of western thought” (Grande, 2004; 3). For example, in the quote from Kincheloe above, Native American and other minority teachers might question the assumption that educational professionals do possess agency, and add a qualification that not all professionals possess that same degree of agency.

Given what I have laid out as the problems of teaching NA/AI literatures and the potential affordances of culturally relevant, critical, and red pedagogy, the question of how to frame research in this area is challenging. After all, the understanding gap of students and teachers can also be present in a researcher. In the introduction, I have argued for framing research using the theoretical and methodological approaches of

multiple disciplines and engaging these multiple frames holistically, in a manner analogous to the synergistic functioning of culturally relevant pedagogy.

In this chapter, I will explain my methodological choices and how my culturally relevant stance influenced those choices. First, I will give an overview of my research site and participants, then identify the phases of the project, detailing the kind of data collection and activities in each phase. Then I will deal with five ethical influences on my methodological choices—reciprocity, respect, friendship, responsibility, and reflexivity. Finally, I will demonstrate how a culturally oriented, grounded-theory approach changed my original research questions and lead me to critical discourse analysis (CDA) and then to what I am calling a critical spatial analysis (CSA).

### ***Research site and context***

The inclusion of works of NA/AI literatures in the curriculum potentially has positive benefits for American Indian and Native American children in schools because there is the possibility of seeing their culture represented positively, which can improve student achievement (Tatum, 1997). This is indeed a worthy goal, and without diminishing it, I wish to add that the study of NA/AI literatures is important for non-Native students as well. One of the tenets of culturally relevant work I have laid out is social consciousness and critique. In aligning my choice of site with that aim, I chose to create the term “understanding gap” to relocate deficits in mainstream, rather than minority,<sup>14</sup> students, a rhetorical move to make visible the lack of understanding that non-

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<sup>14</sup> It is my intention to “talk back” to the term “achievement gap,” which, I believe, promotes categorizing minority students in a deficit model, while neglecting the deficits of the mainstream. This stance also ignores the cultural strengths minority students bring to the classroom.

Native students (and non-Native teachers) often bring to the study of NA/AI literatures. Therefore, I needed a site with predominantly non-Native students.

I was invited by my colleague Liz Turner to do research in her ninth-grade classroom at Rainfield High School,<sup>15</sup> located in a medium-sized city in the Midwest.<sup>16</sup> Liz was a first-year graduate student in my program, as well as a part-time high school teacher at the time (she had taught high school in an urban center for six years prior to entering graduate school). When I told Liz that I was planning to study pedagogical approaches to Native American/American Indian (NA/AI) literatures for my dissertation, she enthusiastically said she would like to teach some Native American literature and invited me into her classroom. I accepted her invitation, and we began meeting to discuss the project, which took place during the spring semester (January through June) of 2006.

The site was a good choice for several reasons: Liz Turner's classes were ninth grade level, and the novel for which I had written a unit, *Wynema*, would, I thought, work well for ninth graders because of the subject matter and reading level; Liz Turner said her department head was enthusiastic about having me do research in the English department; the school was reasonably close to the University, but had not been over-used by other researchers; and the school district responded positively to my request to conduct research. In learning more about the context of the school, I came to see why an administrator might look favorably on a multicultural study: there was a great deal of tension in the school over race issues.

Often, the storyline in a school is that we don't talk about race. Mica Pollock has coined a term for this storyline—colormute—defined as personal and political efforts to

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<sup>15</sup> Not the real name of the school, chosen because of Bob Dylan's introduction to one of his folk songs arguing for social change in the 1960s: "A hard rain's gonna fall means something's gonna happen."

<sup>16</sup> A pseudonym chosen by Liz Turner herself.

delete race talk from American life (Pollock, 2004). Politically, colormuteness functions like colorblindness does, meaning it keeps us from seeing differences in race, acting as a code for maintaining the status quo: racial inequality in schools. Colorblindness and colormuteness are so powerful, they have been characterized as a “White culture of silence about racism” (Tatum, 1997; 196). There were indications of this kind of silence at my research site, and because attention to what is not said is a feature of the methodology I followed, it is important to describe this quality of the context.

Through interviews with Liz Turner, I learned that there was a conflict at the staff level between the African American teachers and the administration over nonretention (due to district budget cuts) of a high percentage of African American teachers for the following school year. According to Liz Turner, some of those African American teachers had more seniority than white teachers who were not laid off, raising the question of whether race was a factor in the decisions. The administration called a special meeting for only the African American teachers to—as Liz Turner put it—warn them to quit stirring up student opinion about the issue. Naturally, this enraged many of the teachers. But even before this conflict arose, race tensions in the school were elevated due to a conflict at a staff development presentation in which speaker Glen Singleton<sup>17</sup> riled the staff by pointing to racist practices in schools.

Tensions among the staff were so elevated that the counseling department started lunchtime sessions for staff to help deal with these tensions. Although neither Liz Turner nor I was present at Singleton’s professional development session (Liz Turner works

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<sup>17</sup> Glenn Singleton helped found Pacific Educational Group, Inc. (PEG) in 1992 to closely support families in their transitions within and between K-12 and higher education. According to PEG’s website, “The company later grew into its intended mission of addressing systemic issues of educational inequity by providing guidance to districts as to how to meet the needs of underserved student of color populations.”

part-time and is not contracted for full-day professional development days), we heard about the meeting from others who characterized the session as incendiary and divisive. To understand these tensions better, we attended two of the meetings facilitated by the counselor. My IRB does not allow me to quote from what I heard at these meetings, but I can characterize them as examples of the “courageous conversations” advocated by their in-service speaker, Glen Singleton. Like other consultants at PEG, Singleton, “helps the educators focus on heightening their awareness of institutional racism and developing effective strategies for closing the achievement gap in their schools.” Singleton advocates that educators practice the agreements and conditions of “Courageous Conversation” as they “struggle to usher in culturally proficient curriculum, instruction and assessment” (2006).

As Liz participated in the courageous conversation, she talked about her own cultural background and experiences with race:<sup>18</sup>

I can't remember a bad experience—it was not even personal—it was when I was 12 years old. I saw it as a disembodied thing. My friends were mainly liberal. At age 12, I saw a letter to the editor calling African Americans “nasty criminals” in (name of city deleted) and that there should be an 8-foot fence at (deleted) road. I wrote a response to it. I knew [the city] was not perfect, but this was wrong. I have a strong African American identity, but it's not contentious. My mom has friends of other races. We have Floridian--mixed black, Native American, and Latin American ancestry. So I didn't identify with racism. As a stranger in a strange land, some of the oppositional anger here in [name of city deleted] I don't identify with. Sometimes I get angry, though. I definitely got mad at the display of white male privilege in my class last week.

Liz Turner focused on her own experiences, both from the past and the present. She was able to talk about racism, rather than deflect to another issue. From this discussion, I

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<sup>18</sup> After consulting with the IRB, I determined that citing Liz Turner's participation in the lunchtime counseling meeting is ethical because 1) I had her general consent to collect audio and video recordings as well as fieldnotes about her teaching and experiences at the school. 2) I explicitly asked her if I could record what she said in this particular instance, and 3) I offered her the opportunity to redact this quote from my dissertation, and she refused.

learned that Liz Turner's cultural background was more diverse than I realized: "mixed black, Native American, and Latin American ancestry," what she defines as "Floridian" ancestry. Her first memory of race comes from when she was twelve and read a racist letter to the editor. The writer advocated building a fence around the inner city to contain African American residents. The city of which he is talking is one, like many U.S. cities, that has been affected by "white flight," the exodus of white residents to the outlying suburbs. The fact that Liz Turner was moved to write a response to this racist letter writer tells me something about her—she has the courage to confront what is "wrong" about her city. Liz presents herself as balanced—not "contentious" but with a "strong African American identity." More support for her presentation of herself as balanced is that she does not identify with the "oppositional anger" in her new city (the site of Rainfield High School). She does not present herself as a victim of or angry about racism. Her comments begin reluctantly: "I can't remember a bad experience" and even after she does recall reading the racist letter, she still claims, "I didn't identify with racism." Some of her discourse further serves to distance herself from racism: "it was not even personal" and "I saw it as a disembodied thing." These comments provide Liz's view of her cultural background and experience with and attitudes toward racism, and these experiences were very much a part of how she operated in the classroom, as the last sentence reveals.

Liz Turner did not mention racism by name until two-thirds through her comments, instead using "it," as in "*it* was not even personal" and "I saw *it* as a disembodied thing." Liz seems to be ambivalent about race talk: wanting to talk about racism, but also distancing herself from "it" in her discourse.

Participating in this lunchtime conversation opened up talk between Liz and me about race that has continued to the present. Throughout the project, Liz and I had conversations on the footing of colleagues and friends. Our relationship meant that I made explicit to her the methodological choices I was making in a way I most likely would not have if we had not been colleagues and friends. For example, I talked about the challenges of completing the Institutional Review Board (IRB) applications, negotiating school district approval, and the coursework I was doing in a qualitative research class alongside the research project. This kind of transparency was a methodological choice that served to diminish barriers between the researcher and the researched.

### ***Phases of the study***

I divide the semester I spent in Liz Turner's classroom into three phases: Phase I, which involved getting to know the classroom culture during a *Romeo and Juliet* unit; Phase II, which involved collecting data more intensively during a Native American unit; and Phase III, in which I occasionally observed the class to see if changes that took place during Phase II persisted. There is also a Phase IV, which covers the time after the school year ended to the present. In Phase IV, I continued to meet with Liz Turner, share data with her for her own projects, and ask her questions as I analyzed data and wrote the dissertation. In Phase IV (which is ongoing) Liz Turner and I have collaborated on conference presentations and an article about this project.

The way in which students and teachers talk about the racial and cultural issues inherent in Native American literatures is complex, and so is the variety of data collected for this project. For example, if it had not been for the racial tensions of the research site, there would not have been lunchtime counseling meetings, and if I had not attended those

sessions, I may not have learned the things I did about Liz’s cultural background and her experiences with race. My original research questions did not mention race specifically, but interactions like these changed the kinds of questions I asked in the project.

The following Gantt<sup>19</sup> chart shows the types of data time it was collected.

Figure 2.1. Project timeline

Type of data	Time data was collected						
	January 2006	February 2006	March 2006	April 2006	May 2006	June 2006	July 2006 to present
	Phase I		Phase II		Phase III		Phase IV
Fieldnotes (142 pages)							
Videotapes of class (12 class periods)							
Surveys (20 out of 21 preliminary surveys; 12 out of 21 final surveys)							
Student work (5 samples) *							
Student interviews (4 students volunteered: Keanna, Ratsa, Chuck, and Jeff)							
Other interviews (2, privilege walk facilitator and teacher present for the walk)							
Teacher interviews (14 audiotapes of face-to-face conversations; 135 e-mails messages from teacher and 242 messages to teacher)							

<sup>19</sup> A Gantt chart is a bar chart that illustrates a project schedule and is named after Henry Gantt (1861-1919) who designed the first Gantt chart in 1910. Gantt charts are commonly used in professional/technical writing. Gantt, H.L. (1974). “*Work, Wages and Profit.*” *The Engineering Magazine*. New York, 1910.

\*powder keg reflections, privilege walk reflections, timetable comparison, stereotypes v. cultural practices activity, and final Wynema essay

## Phase I: January to february

In Phase I, I was present in all three of Liz Turner’s classes of non-honors track, ninth grade students (68 students total) during the second half of their first year of high school. Students studied *Romeo and Juliet* in this phase. I collected fieldnotes to get a sense of the language patterns<sup>20</sup> in the classroom prior to the Native American unit and a sense the classroom culture, to consider how language used in the classroom reflects affordances for student understanding provided by the teacher, to get to know the students, and to choose which of the three sections of ninth grade English I would make the focus of my study.

I wanted to know what kinds of language practices were already in place, what kinds of affordances the teacher was already using, and what kinds of literary language were already being used in the classroom. My preliminary research questions and sub-questions were the following:

*Figure 2.2.* Original research questions and sub-questions

Specifically, when we analyze the language in use in a predominantly non-Native classroom where students are encountering Native American/American Indian literatures, how do instances or repeated patterns of language use by both teachers and students suggest moments of confusion, stasis or development in understanding?
1) How does language used in the classroom reflect affordances for student understanding provided by the teacher? 2) What kinds of language conventions—literary, definitional, or those characteristic of a particular community—do students employ, abandon, or take up in discussing NA/AI literatures? 3) How is language culturally constructed in terms of the cultural knowledge students bring to the classroom and the Native American/American Indian cultural knowledge

<sup>20</sup> By language patterns, I mean repeated instances of ways that students and the teacher talk about literature. For example, are there certain kinds of words that are used to describe the literature? Does the teacher emphasize particular literary language, such as symbol, theme, etc.?

they are exposed to during the unit?

4) How does student language change or not change depending on the mode of discourse; for example, oral discourse vs. written discourse and type of audience?

I wondered what language conventions students “employ, abandon, or take up” when studying NA/AI literatures. Clearly, I was expecting to see some kind of change during the Native American unit. I also expected my research questions to change as I got to know the students and the teacher, as well as their concerns about Native American literatures. Later, as I took a course with Professor Malea Powell called “The American Indian Intellectual Tradition,” I began (and continue) to question my assumption that things had to change. This emphasis on change, especially change associated with progress, is something American Indian intellectuals identify as characteristic of Western thinking. Given the devastation wrought on the indigenous people of North America by such thinking, one manifestation of which is the doctrine of Manifest Destiny that led to genocidal actions so white people could move out West, it is worth questioning such assumptions embedded in my own thinking. This kind of reflection contributed to reformulation of research questions as the project progressed.

Besides taking field notes in Phase I, I had students take a preliminary survey that asked questions about their previous experience with NA/AI literatures as well as about their general literary tastes and the strategies they used to understand literature (see Appendix 3). The survey asks questions about students’ previous experiences with, and expectations about, NA/AI literatures as well as about their literary tastes in general.

I began practicing an action-research approach early in Phase I that slowly transformed into a friendship-as-methodology approach.<sup>21</sup> Doing so helped me to learn

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<sup>21</sup> My idea of friendship as methodology is influenced by Christman (1988) and Tillman-Healy (2003) among others. A full description of friendship as methodology can be found in Chapter 5.

more about Liz's cultural background and involve her in the direction of the project. Starting on January 11, Liz Turner and I began weekly meetings on Wednesdays from 1-2:30 and Fridays from 12-1 to get to know each other and talk about the way the project would proceed. I taped these meetings with a digital voice recorder and downloaded the audio files to my laptop for transcription. The flow of discourse was more dialogic than question and answer. That is, the meetings were informal, rather than formal, and the content flowed from concerns at the research site, to common experiences as graduate students, to personal conversations about families, etc. From these informal meetings and the observations I was making in class, my research questions began to evolve. That is, as I heard Liz Turner talk about her position in the school as an African American teacher and the politics of interacting with other teachers at the school, I realized that my research questions about "culture" were important not just in terms of the Muscogee Creek culture in the novel, but in terms of the teacher, the students, the other people in the school, and myself. We all brought certain notions of culture to the classroom.

## **Phase II: March to April**

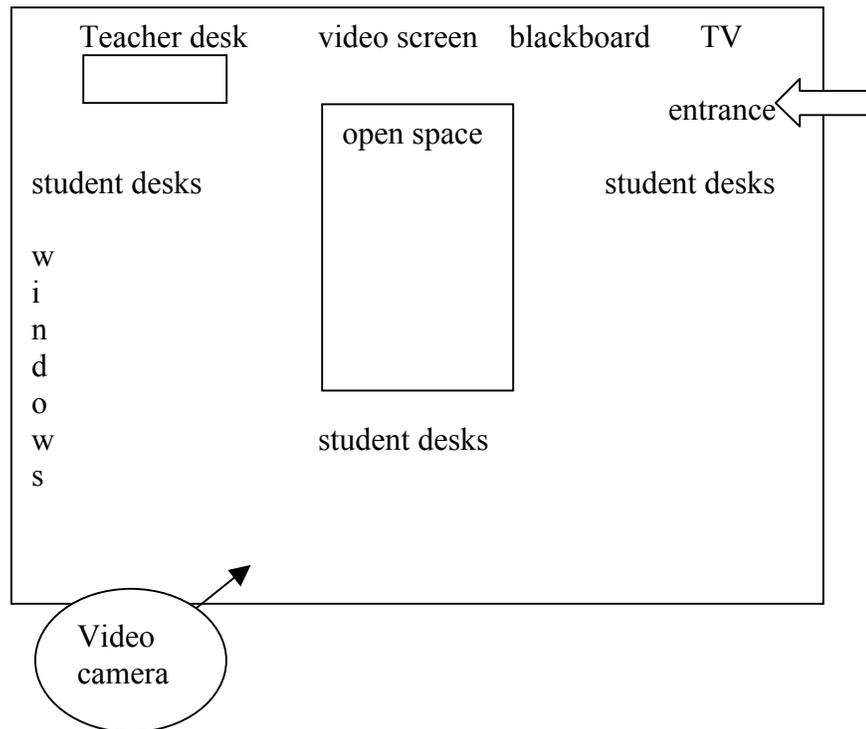
In Phase II I focused on one of the three classes, the third period class, for more in-depth study during the Native American unit. I selected this class because Liz Turner was open to having me focus on it, the class was more racially diverse than other classes, and students were forthcoming in discussion. By forthcoming, I mean the students were more participatory in class discussion and more likely to argue than students in Liz Turner's other classes. For example, during the *Romeo and Juliet* unit, Liz Turner assigned students a summary to write. When she handed back the summaries and went over some samples as a class, students freely gave their opinions on various features of

the writing in the samples. They did not agree with the grade and supported their disagreements with examples from the text. Because of their more lively discussions, I thought this class would be more likely to engage with *Wynema* in interesting ways. Liz Turner often commented on this class, saying how it was more challenging than her other classes. The first-period class was very quiet in comparison, possibly because the students were still sleepy that early in the morning. The second-period class was more homogenous and did not have as many special-education students and students of color as the third-period class. In the third-period class, there was a group of African American girls who tended not to participate in class discussions like the other students.

All twenty-one of the students in this third-period class chose to participate in the study. Each student and his or her parent or guardian signed an Institutional Review Board (IRB)-approved consent form (see Appendix 4), allowing me to videotape the class, collect his or her writing, and interview her or him.

During Phase II I used a digital video camera, positioned at the back corner by the window. I did not want the camera facing into the light of the window, and I wanted to be able to have a view of the center area of the classroom, the open space around which desks were arranged in a U pattern. The following diagram illustrates how the camera was positioned in the room:

Figure 2.3. Diagram of classroom and position of videocamera



The position of the camera was static—I mounted the camera on a tripod, which freed me to move about the room helping students, which was necessary for me to enact the action-research model I intended to follow.<sup>22</sup> To increase sound quality, I connected a lavalier microphone antennae to the camera and a microphone to the teacher. I want to acknowledge that this fixed camera angle does portray a student’s view of what takes place in the classroom and may even be seen as positioning the teacher as a kind of authority. No one asked to operate the camera, and I did not offer, so it is significant to note that I was the sole person making choices about how the video camera recorded those classes. The view of the camera is limited since it was not outfitted with a wide-

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<sup>22</sup> “Those promoting participatory action-research believe that people have a universal right to participate in the production of knowledge which is a disciplined process of personal and social transformation. In this process, people rupture their existing attitudes of silence, accommodation, and passivity, and gain confidence and abilities to alter unjust conditions and structures.” Paolo Freire, forward, *Nurtured by Knowledge: Learning to do Participatory Action-Research* (Smith, 1997).

angle lens. In Frederick Erickson's work about video research procedures and their rationales, he states, "For research purposes, it is best to use raw video footage prepared with a minimum of camera editing, that is shot continuously . . . with little movement of the camera from side to side (panning) and few changes from wide-angle to close up and back again (zooming in and out)" (2006; 177). Erickson argues that the advantage of this kind of footage is that it "provides a continuous and relatively comprehensive record of social interaction, a document that is to some extent phenomenologically neutral, that is, the video recorder does not think while it records" (178). Ricki Goldman (2006) disagrees, arguing that choices made while operating the camera *are* data. But my choice to follow Erickson's model had less to do with following a particular video theory and more to do with being free to pursue an action research model. I wanted to be able to get away from the camera and help students with their class work, as well as help the teacher with her work. This helped me to avoid passivity, to actively engage with the students and the teacher, and to contribute to the learning in the room. Furthermore, freeing myself from the camera allowed me a better opportunity to practice the action research I wished to do.

I had the videotapes transcribed by a hired transcriptionist; then, I reviewed the videotapes and revised the transcriptions myself, which gave me a written text of each day's class during the unit. Also during Phase 2, I continued to take field notes when I was not helping students, as well as after class, and I read student work and made copies of their reflective writing and essays.

### **Phase III: May to June**

In Phase III, I continued to visit the classroom, but not on a daily basis, and I ended the videotaping and returned to taking field notes. The Native American unit was followed by a unit on Sandra Cisneros's *House on Mango Street*. During Phase III, I interviewed several students about their experiences during the Native American unit. I continued to meet and talk with Liz Turner. Students filled out a final survey (Appendix 6). By the end of the school year, I had noticed the spatial change in the classroom, so I was able to do some member-checking on what I saw. That is, on the final day, there was a classroom celebration, and Liz Turner asked the students to go around the room and talk about what they had learned. I then talked about what I had learned and asked the students if they agreed or disagreed with my interpretation.

### **Phase IV and beyond**

Phase IV began when the school year ended, and I no longer had contact with students. I've included this phase because I was still collecting data from Liz Turner and involving her actively in the project. In this phase, I interviewed the teacher and continued to meet with her occasionally to talk about the project. As I was analyzing the data, I sometimes had a question and would send an e-mail message to her about it or call her. She was very helpful in responding to these requests. This phase continued for over a year, until I had drafted my dissertation. At that point, Liz Turner began sharing her own writing on the project, and we collaborated on writing an article for a journal in our field and on writing proposals and giving presentations on the project at national conferences. Given my "friendship as methodology" orientation, it seemed natural to continue working together beyond the end of the school year.

Since this was my first research project, my methodology evolved as I developed a researcher identity. While I entered the project with an intention to practice reciprocity, other approaches, such as friendship as methodology, grew out of the project. I will first address how these influences—reciprocity, respect, friendship, and responsibility—inform my research methods. Then I will explain how a Grounded Theory approach led to the use of critical discourse analysis over other kinds of discourse analysis, and how, in my efforts to address the issues of colormuteness and colorblindness, I incorporated spatial and visual analysis.

### ***Reciprocity: Giving of your skills while gathering data***

A researcher is in a position to take something from the community he or she is studying: the data and experience of the research project. It is natural to ask, what does the community get in return? Indigenous scholars (Deloria, 1969; Smith, 1999) criticize a model of research that only takes from indigenous people, further diminishing their power. An alternative model of research is participatory action research, also called collaborative research (Miscovic and Hoop, 2006), which includes the practice of reciprocity. I understand reciprocity to be giving back to the community from which one collects data.

My introduction to the practice of reciprocity came when I assisted Professor Lesley Rex with her Literacy in Action project at a large urban high school. In the case of Dr. Rex's project, "giving back" took the form of providing professional development gratis to teachers in the English department on topics they wanted to pursue, such as teaching argumentative writing. Sometimes, reciprocity is problematic in that researchers have a sense of what they want to "give," and participants have a different idea. For

example, Subedi (2006) intended to share his research results with the Nepalese community he studied, but found that teachers preferred that he reciprocate by tutoring their students in English. When reciprocity reflects participants' goals, it can be a way of equalizing power in classroom research (Zigo, 2001). Taking a collaborative approach in this way is a component of Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Kemmis and Wilkinson, 1998), and PAR has similar goals to critical pedagogy (Miscovic and Hoop, 2006). My experiences and reading in the literature convinced me that practicing reciprocity should be part of my methodology but that I needed to be cautious in how I practiced it so that it would be appropriate for my particular setting.

Before any data was collected and before I even set foot in the classroom, I began to practice reciprocity. In asking for permission from both the principal and the department head to do research in their building, I also offered my services as a writing consultant gratis. I gave a presentation to the English teachers at the school on the principles of *Writing on Demand*, from a book I co-authored with Professors Anne Gere and Leila Christenbury.

Besides practicing reciprocity with the larger community of the school that hosted me as a researcher, I also wanted to reciprocate with the teacher. Knowing that she was very busy and had little experience with NA/AI literatures, a month before I entered her classroom I gave her a copy of the 30-page unit plan I wrote on the novel *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* by S. Alice Callahan. The unit reflected a culturally relevant pedagogical framework based on my review of literature on NA/AI pedagogical practices. To make the unit acceptable in school curricula, the lessons are tied to standards developed by the National Council for Teachers of English. Because I hoped to

save Liz Turner time and effort, I included major and minor assessments, a unit calendar, daily lesson plans, handouts, additional resources, and a glossary of terms. I talked about the underlying ideas of the framework with Liz in an attempt to share with her what has been identified as the best practice when teaching Native American literature. I emphasized that I did not expect her to follow the plan, but rather to use it as a starting point, and then ignore it or revise it to fit her particular students, her teaching style, her classroom environment, and her district requirements.

During the winter break leading up to the start of this research project, I thought back to my time as a high school English teacher. To a high school English teacher, the break was not necessarily a time for relaxing, but a time to read and respond to the growing stack of student essays that had piled up in the previous weeks. My former experiences as a high school teacher gave me an idea of how I might give something else useful. So, I asked Liz Turner if she had papers to grade over break. She did indeed, so I asked her if she would like me to grade them. She agreed, taking time to share her rubric and explain the standards for grading. Through this first act of grading papers, I was able to lighten her load a bit, as well as get to know her students as writers, and she was able to get to know me as a teacher by seeing how I commented on and graded the papers. It was my way to practice reciprocity for her by doing something that was useful to her before I began doing research in her classroom.

I also wanted to practice reciprocity with the students who would be sharing their written work as well as their classroom comments and responses in interviews with me. To give back to them, I read and commented on their work, gave extra help on a nearly daily basis, and treated them to snacks and drinks on special occasions. I also gave extra

help and encouragement to those who were falling behind. In other words, I endeavored to exude the warmth characteristic of an ethic of caring in culturally relevant pedagogy.

All of these ways of practicing reciprocity were not only a reflection of my methodological orientation, but also a natural impulse for me because of my experience working within the culture of a school. It was important to me to retain this way of being in a school rather than take on what for me would have been an artificial role of detached observer. It also would have been morally conflicting because there is so much work to be done in schools. To stand by not helping would have been troubling to me personally.

Reciprocity helped me to take a more culturally relevant stance because through my involvement with the school, teacher, and students, I learned more about the culture of the school community as well as the individuals within it. As I learned more, I made choices about the direction my research would take. For example, from sitting in on the lunchtime staff meeting facilitated by the counselor on the topic of race (discussed in the Introduction), I was drawn to find out more about Glen Singleton, so I attended an evening meeting for the African American parents in the community. Attending that session raised my level of awareness about how the school district is perceived by African American parents and what they see as some of the issues in local schools. One of those issues is respect.

### ***Respect: Cultivating culturally sensitive relationships with research participants***

In an interview with Dennis Sparks (2002) Glen Singleton explained the importance of respect in schools:

There's only one rule that's necessary in schools, and that's the rule of respect.

Respect is at the heart of successful social relationships. But it's important to understand how respect may look and feel different across racial borders. To effectively show me respect, you must understand what my experience is all about. As my teacher, I need you to understand that as I come to the school each morning I go through a number of racial tests. If you don't understand where I'm coming from, I will feel less safe in your classroom and in my relationship with you. And so I'm going to distance myself from the tasks you as my teacher want me to perform. (Sparks, 2002; 39)

In her work exploring and personalizing culturally relevant pedagogies for teachers, Seidl identified respect as a common disposition demonstrated by successful culturally responsive teachers (Seidl, 2007). Powell's longitudinal study of a teacher named Amy showed that her development of respectful relationships with students was a part of her culturally relevant approach (Powell, 1997). Respect is an important issue for Native scholars like Sandy Grande as well. Grande presents respect as one of the hallmarks of indigenous research, and the practice derives from the relationship between elders and those the elders are teaching (Grande, 2004). While reciprocity can seem like almost a financial transaction—I receive something for which I “pay”—in Athabaskan and other Native cultures, it is more about respect than about capitalism.

I observed this way of showing respect firsthand when a Kaska Athabaskan pre-service teacher and I visited the Athabaskan village of Tanacross as part of our practicum experience for our Alaska teacher certification program. My classmate spent a great deal of time and effort gathering gifts, such as bundles of sage she had collected herself and gloves from the hardware store, to bring to the Native elders of the village we were visiting. When we arrived, instead of reporting to the school and beginning our study of the classroom, she led me on visits to several families' homes. I didn't quite understand what she was doing—my workaholic self felt I was slacking. Only later did I realize that she had found out who the elders were in the village and arranged to meet them in the

tribal hall that evening. The hours spent sitting at various families' kitchen tables and in the tribal hall, talking about everything except school and education, did not appear purposeful to me. However, later I saw that she was practicing a kind of methodology that Sandy Grande describes as "deep hanging out," and what Tanaka, et al describe as Kat'il'a "the act of becoming still—of slowing down, despite an ingrained and urgent need to know and desire for busyness" (Tanaka, 2007; 100). Later that night at the tribal hall, my classmate set about giving the gifts she had brought to the elders, her way of expressing respect for the people whose community we were visiting. I noticed that my friend gave gifts that she thought our hosts would find useful and meaningful. Gloves to protect their hands when working and sage to purify them before ceremonies.

Had my colleague not chosen to show respect in the way she did, I'm certain our experience at the village school would have been quite different. Our conversations with residents of Tanacross both inside of and outside of the school building were characterized by a kind of openness and acceptance that might not have been there had we reported directly to the school and confined ourselves to that authoritative space.

I tried to show similar respect for Liz Turner and her students by first meeting them on their grounds. That meant arranging to meet Liz for lunch or coffee (rather than interviewing her in my office at the university) to begin getting to know her and her view of her students in a relaxed environment. It also meant making overtures to get to know her as a person and not merely as a research subject. When Liz wrote in one of her papers that she felt I was genuinely interested in African American culture and not "fakin' the funk," I took heart that my attitude of respect was being read in the way I intended. Respect helped pave the way for a friendship.

## ***Friendship: Opportunities for deep listening and deep seeing***

Several researchers report the development of a friendship in their relationship with their subjects (Hayano, 1979; Christman, 1988; Tillman-Healy, 2004). While friendship cannot be guaranteed, it can be cultivated, and to do so is a methodological choice.

Researchers such as Christman, who writes about working in the field as a female friend, detail how their positioning as a friend to their participants leads to the collection of different kinds of data than they might collect with a more distanced approach and also determines a different relationship with that data. Christman points out that researchers studying their own group, which is what I, as a graduate student and former high school teacher, was doing with Liz Turner, have to address not only the issue of researcher bias typical of qualitative methodology but also “an involvement and intimacy” with their “subjects” (Hayano 1979). Christman writes, “It is difficult for me to think of the conversations in my study as interviews” (Christman, 1988). Indeed, much of the recorded talk between me and Liz Turner sounds like conversations between friends/colleagues. There is attention to each other’s families, commiseration about the workload, supportive problem solving, and sharing about programmatic concerns—in other words, the talk is holistic rather than limited to research questions.

Christman argues that it was her “shared status” with her research subjects (married returning graduate student with children) that allowed and encouraged women to speak of issues that might be seen by outsiders (for example, men or childless women) as irrelevant to research on women’s graduate study (1998; 76). Liz Turner and I also had a shared status as graduate students, but because I was a bit further along in the program, was older, married and was parenting small children, our shared status was limited. Also,

I am white and she is black and Native American, a difference that we talked about frequently. We mentored each other on issues that arose from the differences in our shared status, as I will talk about further in the chapter on friendship as methodology.

Hayano discusses how distinctions between inside and outside, between researcher and researched are becoming increasingly blurred, and she points out that the insider/outsider relationship is not dichotomous, but instead represents a continuum. This perspective stresses that it is not the scientific detachment of the researcher as complete stranger that ensures validity, but knowledge of where one is along as many dimensions of that continuum as possible (Hayano, 1979).

But considering one's place along the continuum is not enough. There are also ethical dilemmas involved in the blurred distinction between researcher and researched. The danger of subordination was never far from my mind. What if my portrayal of Liz Turner perpetuated stereotypes of African American women? I worried that many of the things Ms. Turner talked about with me did arise out of our friendship and were not meant for the research context. Fortunately for me, a continued close relationship allowed me to check in with her when I was not sure of the boundaries of our talk.

I should add that technology, in the form of a website, e-mail, and editing software, assisted our endeavor. Along with my dissertation committee members, Liz Turner is a member of my "gradtools" site, a University password-protected site where I post all my chapter drafts, fieldnotes, audio recordings, tables, data analysis, bibliography, interviews, literature reviews, and video transcripts. She thus has access to raw data for her own use, as well as my work for her response (member-checking). The website also gives us a place to post drafts of an article for *English Journal* that we have

collaborated on. Our friendship has been maintained by the use of e-mail when we cannot meet in person. We've exchanged over 100 e-mails on this project, from quick questions about a student, to longer discussions about the ethics of sharing our work with other graduate students. Editing software has been useful as we respond to each other's drafts. Liz Turner wrote a paper for the National Women's Studies Association conference in 2007 and also wrote about the project for her second-year PhD exam and her prospectus. Her experiences with this research project have led to her choosing the same site for her own research work and looking more deeply into issues of race in that context. Thanks to our ongoing friendship, she has been generous in sharing her writing with me, and each time she does, my data set deepens and my perspective changes. Friendship as methodology became such a powerful part of the project, that eventually I decided to dedicate a whole chapter to it (see Chapter Five).

### ***Responsibility***

Beverly Tatum pointed out that to do nothing about racism is to be complicit in the racist structure of our society (Tatum, 2003). One has to *actively* resist racism to avoid complicity. What is my responsibility in this project to actively resist appropriating facets of Native American culture? To what degree is it my responsibility to ensure my methodology is anti-colonizing? Because I was not certain how to answer these questions, I made choices in this project to limit the potential damage I might unwittingly do; for example, I chose not to study American Indian/Native American participants. I attended and taught at primarily non-Native schools (my high school Alaska was 14% Alaska Native), and I wanted to do my research in a context with which I was familiar and with participants who were predominantly non-Native. Negotiating my own

understanding gap as the students dealt with theirs meant we could truly be co-learners in the Freirian sense.

Besides being responsible for social consciousness, I, of course, had a responsibility to protect my participants under the ethical standards of the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which had approved my study. I protected the identity of the students and teacher by making sure that pseudonyms were in place. My consent form made it clear that a student could choose to withdraw from the research project at any time. All students in the class and their parents agreed to participate in the study and no one withdrew.

Because my proposed study dealt with human subjects—three classes of ninth grade students and their teacher—it was important to devise safeguards to prevent, or at least limit, the negative impacts on their lives. However, because the teacher and I are both in the same doctoral program and students in our program often talk about their research projects with each other in classes and at our weekly department meetings, I needed to be careful.

The collegial relationship between the teacher and me also increased the risks for the students. I worried that they might feel that if they were not “good” research subjects, I would complain to their teacher, and it could have a negative impact their grades. It was important that we emphasized to students in both oral and written form that participating in the research project would not affect their grades.<sup>23</sup> My consent form also made it clear

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<sup>23</sup> On the subject of grades, I want to point out that when I graded student papers over break, the grades I gave were reviewed and approved by Liz Turner, who retained full responsibility for grading her students’ work. It might be useful to know that I did this grading prior to obtaining consent and beginning the project. Furthermore, grading student work is different from affecting student grades due to their participation in the project. I may be less cautious than others about issues of grading because I am

that a student could choose to withdraw from the research project at any time. What that means is that I was prepared to negotiate with the parent and student to place my camera so that the student did not appear on my video and to redact the students' contributions to class discussions, as well as to not collect his or her papers nor interview him or her. These contingencies did not have to be used for this particular project because no student asked to withdraw from the project.

Ethically, I think it is important to avoid judging students for their contribution to the research. I decided to try to forego language attached to value judgments, such as "That was a 'good' comment," when talking about my research with the teacher so as to avoid influencing her opinions of her students. I didn't want to conflate the judgment of a useful research participant with the concept of a good student.

Part of responsibility includes considering the validity of my project. With such a small sample, validity is certainly an issue. There is a need, when looking at the literature, for large-scale study of curricula, lesson plans, and delivery associated with teaching NA/AI literatures. However, I chose to set up this qualitative research the way I did because there is also a need to explore the language used in classroom discourse to see what it might reveal about the pedagogy, the use of literary conventions, and the perception of culture. Identifying transformative (Haviland, 2004) and liberatory (Freire, 1993) patterns is something useful that may emerge from such micro-level analysis and may provide directions for future research. Some of the steps I took to increase validity—

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accustomed to annually scoring the essays of students of hundreds of teachers across the country in my role as a scorer for the Advanced Placement English program.

which are common ones in qualitative research—were to use multiple forms of data (triangulation),<sup>24</sup> involve subjects in member checking, and engage outside readers.

### ***Reflexivity***

Part of being respectful and responsible is reflecting on one's impact in the classroom. "Reflexivity calls for the need to be more open and accountable to how one has participated in research and produced knowledge" (Subedi, 2006; 575). There are degrees of reflexivity, from empty, mechanical or merely autobiographical reflexivity to rigorous reflexivity advocated by Jackson (2004), which challenges researchers to contribute to the dismantling of oppressive structures.

Because this research project concerns the teaching of a work of Native American literature, I needed to think carefully about my position as a non-Native, Caucasian, middle class, educated female. What power and privilege is afforded to me by my race and class and how would that affect my method of doing research?

As a non-Native person, I entered this project with a great deal of hesitation. While all of the research I did for my literature review can be justified as improving my own pedagogical practice and heightening my own cultural sensitivity, at some point I would be stating the implications of my research. Out of respect to indigenous people, how could I avoid appropriating Native culture or knowledge in the way I carried out my research? That is, how could I avoid a kind of academic imperialism? To whom should I or could I be accountable to make sure my methodology did not further the process of colonization? I know from comments of Native American graduate students and faculty at my university that if one plans to write a novel about a tribe, one ought to seek

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<sup>24</sup> Golafshani, N. "Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research." (2003). *The qualitative report*. 8.4. 597-607.

permission from that tribe, and if one wants to do research on tribal lands, one applies to the tribal council. I also know that not everyone values the dominant culture's urge to know or acknowledges a right to know. Because my research subjects are mainly non-Native, did that mean that I was immune to academic imperialism, or could my work lead to putting myself in a position that may be conceived of as speaking *for* NA/AI people? Would I be perceived as using Native material to put myself forward as a scholar, as did women in the 1800s when they spoke out on the "Indian problem" to gain a right to speak in national politics? (Portnoy, 2005). Avoiding academic imperialism involves considering and re-considering these issues and my positioning throughout the project.

Yet, because of the dearth of understanding—in some quarters—about NA/AI literatures and teaching methods, I often find myself in discursive situations in which I am positioned as the "expert" in the group. To try to pre-empt such positioning, in my English 124 class, "Reading, Thinking, Talking and Writing about NA/AI literatures," I was direct with my students in saying that I am not Native American, nor am I an expert in NA/AI literatures, and that we would be exploring questions about NA/AI literatures together. I didn't hesitate to make my self-questioning transparent to my students, even if it may have detracted from the power of my position as teacher. In moving from the role of teacher to researcher, I continued self-questioning and pre-emptive moves to avoid constructing myself as an expert. I don't feel it is appropriate to "lead" in this area of study, but rather to assume the position offered by some Native scholars: to "walk with" Native people in their journey (Grande, 2004).

While I was eager to share the resources I had encountered in my graduate studies of NA/AI literatures, I also wanted to defer to the teacher as the classroom authority and

as a person of NA/AI heritage.<sup>25</sup> I would characterize my attitude about my positioning as divided. At times, I was positioned as an “expert” on Native American issues and sometimes operated within this position to get a point across or encourage students to do a certain kind of work; at other times, I sought ways to actively resist this positioning. For example, when Liz Turner asked in the middle of class for a definition of the Dawes Act, I readily provided it, but at the same time, I announced to students that I would be learning along with them, that my experience with NA/AI literatures was limited.

So what was my role in this research project? I see myself as what Jean Anyon describes as “an agent of non-reproduction” (Anyon, 1981). That is, as someone who seeks to disrupt the functioning of school as a means of social reproduction, to prevent schools from turning out students who are bound to a particular social class. As such, it was imperative that I closely examine my own discourse, as well as the discourses of my classroom and the classrooms I study. I also see myself as “standing under” the discourses of the people I wish to understand (Ratcliffe, 2005). Discourses are ways of communicating that both create and are created by conventional ways of thinking, linked ways that constitute ideologies, ideologies that serve to circulate power in society. It is this ideological basis that allows schooling to be a force of reproduction, that is, of reproducing the inequities of our class structure. How could I disrupt this reproduction in a way that demonstrated deep listening and deep seeing?

In the next section, I will explain how a Grounded Theory approach moved me toward taking a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to my discourse analysis.

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<sup>25</sup> Liz Turner is not an enrolled member of a tribe, but enrollment as a means of identifying as Indian is highly problematic. I was not sure at the beginning of the project to what degree Liz Turner identified with her Indian heritage.

## ***Employing a grounded theory approach to qualitative research***

My qualitative approach is based on Strauss and Corbin's method of Grounded Theory. I refined my research proposal using their strategies for formulating research questions—I chose a global question and then narrowed it to a reasonable size to address through framing sub-questions that were specific and also allowed me flexibility to explore pedagogical approaches to NA/AI literatures in depth as I went through the process of data analysis. In analyzing my data, I used the following procedures: “*conceptualizing and reducing data, elaborating categories in terms of their properties and dimensions, and relating through a series of prepositional statements*” (Anselm Strauss, 1998; 12). In other words, I coded in such a way as to revise my research questions and to build theory as I went along. To that end, I participated in the interplay between my thinking and my data by self-reflecting throughout the process. Furthermore, by extending my vision of participatory action research to include involving my primary participant in the process of data analysis, I practiced a kind of Grounded Theory that was more expansive than just the interplay between my own thinking and the data. This particular qualitative approach allowed me to be both creative and systematic with my research. It also helped me to practice the ethics of reciprocity, respect, friendship, and reflexivity. In addition, it allowed me to utilize my learning from discourse analysis in the disciplines of both Education and English. From my exploration of discourse analysis in the field of education, I narrowed in on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the most useful approach because it would help me analyze oppressive structures. From my study of rhetoric in English, I gravitated toward spatial theory. Using approaches from both disciplines strengthened my work because it helped me to look at my data from multiple perspectives and layer discourse and spatial analysis together, which I believe helped me

to see the classroom in a way I would not have been able to, had I been working with theorists in one discipline only. It makes a difference, I assert, where a student is positioned spatially in the classroom when he or she speaks. If, for example, an African American girl speaks from within a group of other African American girls at the back of the classroom as opposed to surrounded by white peers at the front of the classroom, that discourse can and should be examined critically.

I have summarized the flow of my data selection and the rationale for those selections in the following chart. Note that once I identified especially rich passages in my coding, I moved from continued coding to critical discourse analysis of those passages for the purpose of discovering nuances of meaning about the larger concepts of authority, friendship, and understanding. For the concept of space, I followed the conventions of the humanities in doing a close reading of the literary text and the text of my transcript rather than following the social science convention of coding.

Figure 2.4. Flowchart of selection of data

Selection of Data/Rationale for Selection	
Rainfield High School selected as school site ↓	This site was selected because it is a fairly typical large American High School with mostly non-Native students and teachers.
Liz Turner's classroom selected as classroom site: Three classes of 9 <sup>th</sup> grade English students selected for fieldnote study in January 2006. ↓	Selected because Liz Turner heard about my interest in pedagogical approaches to NA/AI literatures and volunteered her classroom as a site of study. Liz Turner was an ideal teacher for the study because, like many English teachers, she had not taught a work of NA/AI literature before, but she was willing to do so. The fact that her classrooms were all 9 <sup>th</sup> grade was also useful because the Wynema Unit I had written was designed for the 9 <sup>th</sup> grade level.
Narrowed to one class: 3 <sup>rd</sup> period for videotaping and interviews (21 students) ↓	Narrowed to one class based on advice from dissertation committee. The 3 <sup>rd</sup> period was chosen because students were more forthcoming in discussion than the students in the other two classes were. Also, this class was more racially diverse and one of my research questions was concerned with how language in use in the classroom was culturally constructed.
A rich case emerged: the powder keg day and privilege walk ↓	The data related to these two events was selected because they comprised an incidence of peak tension in the classroom. Given the conflict represented in the literature about teaching NA/AI literatures and the questions surrounding the origin of this conflict, the study of these events offered some opportunity to gain insight into the nature and possible cause of tension in the NA/AI literature classroom.
4 major concepts emerged from data: authority, power, friendship, space ↓	Authority, power, and friendship were cited by Liz Turner numerous times in the data from the powder keg and privilege walk day. Spatial changes were noted in field notes and confirmed by visual analysis of videotapes. I radiated my analysis of the data both forward and backward from these days, highlighting instances of these concepts in play.

Selection of Data/Rationale for Selection (con't.)	
<p>Elaborated the following codes for authority:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Teacher downplaying her experience about NA</li> <li>2) Teacher as moral authority on how Indians treated in US</li> <li>3) Teacher as factual authority</li> <li>4) Teacher working to build consensus in class</li> <li>5) Teacher sharing authority with students</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>The charting of the authority codes at left was based on reading through data and noticing patterns. After some time, I realized that it would be helpful to read about theories of authority to see how my initial codes aligned/did not align with them.</p>
<p>A return to theory: readings in authority, power, and friendship led to additional possible codes to search for in the data:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Theoretical readings were chosen on recommendation from colleagues and professors working in the areas of authority/power and friendship, as well as on what was commonly cited in those initial recommendations.</p>
<p>4 authority codes explored: legitimacy (categories: rational, traditional, charismatic, and legal-professional) and additional ways of handling authority that were noticed in the data, such as downplaying authority, shifting authority to students were added to codes.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>Following a Grounded Theory approach, I elaborated on the categories of authority as I analyzed data where authority was salient. I used categories for legitimacy from Weber and Pace. Data that did not seem to fit into these categories, I labeled as “cultural legitimacy.” Because cultural legitimacy seemed most related to the issues of race that were important in the rich case of the powder keg day and privilege walk day, I pursued that category instead of coding all instances of the other categories of authority (rational, traditional, charismatic, and legal-professional).</p>
<p>Data from student surveys about previous experience with and expectations about NA/AI literature was selected (20 out of 21 students completed surveys)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>I selected this data because experience is linked to the legal-professional category of legitimacy, and therefore to authority. If student experience were greater than teacher experience, then challenges to authority might be expected. I did not use data from the surveys that was unrelated to the emerging codes.</p>
<p>Coded sections of data analyzed at a micro level using critical discourse analysis (CDA)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↓</p>	<p>CDA was used to look more deeply at selected segments of data identified by coding scheme above. CDA helps make clear the ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined. I found that when Liz Turner used cultural legitimacy, she concurrently took a critical approach to the subject matter. The exchange with Lyric was chosen because it most clearly illustrated that phenomenon.</p>

Selection of Data/Rationale for Selection (con't.)	
6 friendship codes explored: everyday conversation and involvement, compassion and caring, giving/helping, vulnerability, hope/justice, protection, and mentoring ↓	These codes were selected through a Grounded Theory process of moving between theory on friendship and analysis of data. Data from interactions between teacher and researcher via e-mail, interview, and classroom recordings was selected because it pertained to friendship
Culturally Relevant Pedagogy data selected ↓	The focus on friendship as methodology led to reflection on my research methods, and I began to see a parallel between my research approach and culturally relevant pedagogy, so I analyzed my data again through this lens, and in so doing discovered that many facets of CRP theory can also be applied to building a theory of what I'm calling "culturally relevant research." This new focus led to a re-organization of my methodological approach under ethical categories of reciprocity, respect, friendship, responsibility, and reflexivity—some of which are derived from CRP.
Location of student seating analyzed ↓	This data was chosen because a change in student seating was noticed. Because of the focus on language in the research question, a consideration of who was speaking and where they were sitting was made
New data selected for analysis: student's written responses to the powder keg day, the privilege walk, and the final survey ↓	This data was selected to address the part of the research questions that focused on student understanding. A chart showing how I coded student understanding can be found in Appendix 5

### ***Focusing on critical discourse analysis***

Because I was interested in the ways in which students struggle with the language used to describe NA/AI literatures when they engage in classroom discussion, Woofitt's (2005) framework of conversation analysis seemed to be appropriate. According to Woofitt, conversation analysis's key assumption is that language is used for social action,

and this aligns with the culturally relevant pedagogical approach I laid out in the introduction. Another assumption of conversation analysis is that speakers' communicative competencies (procedures, methods, maxims, and practices) are related to their membership in a language-speaking community (Wooffitt, 2005). This led me to explore the characteristics of my participants' community. For example, much of my work in Phase One centered on looking for patterns of language that both teachers and students used to talk about literature, to get a sense for what was conventional in this particular classroom.

One of the conventional moves that I noticed early on in this classroom was that of the teacher minimizing her authority and putting students in leadership positions. At the beginning of the Romeo and Juliet Unit, Liz Turner decided to have the students do a choral reading of the prologue. Rather than lead it herself, she put a student in charge, saying, "OK, Chuck, you're the engineer, start the train." She had another student lead the class in clapping out an iambic pentameter rhythm and yet another student lead the class in stomping the lines, in what could be seen as a culturally relevant approach for her African American students. At a different time, Liz Turner again put a student in a leadership position when several students were struggling with lower-than-desired grades at midterm. She asked Tay-Tay to tell the class how he manages to maintain his A in the class, and in the follow-up discussion she asked, "At what point do we start doing things for ourselves instead of relying on teachers and parents?" Noting this pattern of discursive moves that position students as leaders helped me to contextualize the teacher's pedagogical approach to NA/AI literature later in the semester.

A third assumption of conversation analysis is that patterns of interaction can be “identified and explored as the sites in which particular kinds of interpersonal activities are accomplished” (Wooffitt, 2001, 49). As the examples above show, these patterns reveal that the teacher is trying to help students take a more active role in their own learning. The teacher’s efforts contribute to the creation of a classroom community.

The ninth grade English classroom can be seen as both a speech community and a discourse community, according to Johnstone’s definition (2002). As a speech community, the participants are spatially defined by the city they live in. For example, in papers students wrote about their city (which I read prior to visiting their classroom), many of them chose to describe a sports stadium, which they called by a particular name that only local people use. As a speech community, students are also defined by the school they attend. There are certain conventions of speech particular to that group.<sup>26</sup> The students I studied were also a discourse community in that they were conversant in the conventions of the English classroom, and of their classroom in particular.

While these discourse analysis approaches were useful in understanding the research setting, as my research questions evolved to consider the racial tensions in the classroom, I turned more to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a useful tool for an analysis of the cultural component of NA/AI literatures study because as Johnstone points out, “The goal of CDA is to uncover the ways in which discourse and ideology are intertwined” (2002; 45). The study of Native American literatures, as I discussed in Chapter One, often brings out anger and tension in the classroom, and these conflicts have to do with race and culture. CDA is “critical in that in the sense that it aims to show non-obvious ways in which language is involved in social relations of power and

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<sup>26</sup> Unfortunately, naming them compromises the anonymity of my research site.

domination, and in ideology” (Fairclough, 2001; 229). Part of the ideological structure of the high school English classroom is the power of the canon to authorize the literature of certain cultural groups. In the following example, a CDA approach helps make visible the racial tension in the class.

### **Critical discourse analysis of a privilege walk discussion**

On the third day of the Wynema Unit (the Native American/American Indian Unit), the students participated in a privilege walk, facilitated by a university professor.<sup>27</sup> In this activity, space is used to visually represent the racial, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic differences among the students in the class. The objective of the privilege walk is to help students understand the nature of privilege. Students line up across the middle of the room, the facilitator reads a series of statements, and students take steps forward or backward depending on whether each statement applies to them. Sample statements include, “If you were ever discouraged from academics or jobs because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back” and “If your family ever inherited money or property, take one step forward” (See Appendix 15 for a complete list of statements)

After the students took steps forward and back according to the facilitator’s statements, the facilitator tried to start a discussion about the activity. During this time, students stayed in the position they had landed in after taking steps forward and backward, which meant that the African American girls were in the back of the classroom, the mixed race boys, white girls, and students of lower socioeconomic status were in the middle, and the white males of higher socioeconomic status were at the front.

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<sup>27</sup> This facilitator signed an IRB consent form to be videorecorded and interviewed.

The students in this class, usually so forthcoming, were unusually quiet.

The facilitator then commented on the silence: “You’re a very quiet class.” When I said that was “unusual” for this group, the facilitator followed up on that until finally, Allie, a white female, responded. In the following excerpt from my transcription of the videotape recording of that day, I have used the Jefferson (1979) model of transcript notation, a choice I made because it is commonly used by researchers in education and because it allows for me to notate important qualities of the utterances like pauses, lower tones, faster rates of speaking, and overlaps in conversation. A key to my notations can be found in Appendix 7, though I have tried to work the meaning of the notations into my discussion here to model a technique that will be used in later chapters.

256 Facilitator: What can you do with this information in the future? (5.0) Wow  
257 ((whispered)) You’re a very  
258 [quiet class  
259 Kelly Sassi: [Usually they are not. Usually, they’re very forthcoming. Right,  
260 Ms. Turner?=  
261 Liz Turner: =°Yeah°=  
262 KS: = This is unusual.  
263 F: Why does it be unusual? What was unusual?  
264 Allie: Maybe unusual because it’s an awkward situation.  
265 F: Why is it an awkward situation?  
266 A: Because it visual -- it visually sh::::ows -- >no, now don’t take any  
267 offense< -- it visually shows us the racial differences in our classroom.  
268 ‘cause well usually, it’s not -- you know we’re all sitting down and we all

269            kind of contribute. It's not any -- like dead silent. But it's an awkward  
270            situation and knowing -- and every time someone took a step backward,  
271            you knew that they were -- it was like a worse-off situation or that they  
272            had been through something else that you haven't experienced.

In the above excerpt the facilitator has posed a question for the students: “What can you do with this information in the future?” Note the five-second pause after her question. As if hesitant to break an already extended wait time, the facilitator whispers, “Wow,” and then comments on how quiet the class is. I overlap with her last two words “quiet class,” to let the facilitator know that the students are not usually so quiet. Although I think my interruption of the facilitator’s turn is due to high engagement—as a researcher who has been studying this particular classroom, especially paying attention to use of language—although it is also a “dispreferred” move (Johnstone, 2002; 73). My need to get Liz Turner to verify my statement may be indicative of some kind of “repair” for this dispreferred move in turn-taking. I also repeat myself after Ms. Turner affirms my assertion by saying again, “This is unusual.” The facilitator picks up on my statement to ask why it is unusual that the students are so quiet. Her question is not directed to me personally; she is using it as another tack to get students to engage in her original discussion question, and Allie picks up on this cue to give an extended response. She also repeats the word “unusual,” making six repetitions of some variation of usual or unusual in as many lines (259-264). Why have the facilitator, the student, and I become so preoccupied with what is usual/unusual in these few turns? It seems important to me to make explicit the fact that this is usually a talkative class, but in the privilege walk

discussion they are unusually silent. Indeed, I do feel there is a meaning to the silence. The lack of talk and lack of movement freeze this five seconds in time. By bringing up the unusualness of their silence, I have switched the topic to a different level, a kind of meta level, where students are not just sharing their thinking or feeling, but evaluating how their actions stand out as different from the rest of the classroom interactions they have had prior to this day.

It is the student who breaks us out of these six lines marked by the repetition of the words usual and unusual. She answers the facilitator's last question with this response: "Maybe unusual because it's an awkward situation." There is a marked difference in tone between this student and both the facilitator and I. The facilitator and I use more questioning tones; the student sounds matter-of-fact. I feel a pang of guilt because by calling the situation "awkward," and using the tone of voice that she does, Allie points to the discomfort she feels at participating in the privilege walk, an activity that the adults in the room have mandated that she participate in. Not only have we made her feel uncomfortable, we are making multiple overtures to get her to talk about her discomfort. Although she uses the word "maybe" to preface her statement, her tone suggests there is no "maybe" about it—it is plainly an awkward situation. Nevertheless, the facilitator gently presses on, asking, "Why is it an awkward situation?"

First, I want to linger on Allie's command, spoken at a faster rate than the rest of her utterances: ">no, now don't take any offense<". Why does Allie need to preface her comments on what feels awkward, what is unusual about this activity, with a command that her hearer not take offense? To whom is she addressing this admonition? And what kind of offense does she fear her listener will take? Is she addressing the facilitator

because she is about to reveal why this activity was so awkward for her? Is she addressing her classmates because she is about to veer from the storyline that “we don’t talk about race?” As a white girl, is she perhaps trying to inoculate her next statement against its potential to offend the African American students in class? Is this an imagined fear or has she been in this situation before?

Another notable part of Allie’s response is the phrase, “we’re all sitting down and we all kind of contribute.” The repetition of “we’re all” and “we all” groups everyone in the class together. She discursively constructs the class as a single group, a move that suggests inclusion and wholeness. She is constructing her own notion of what is “usual” for this group. She claims that in a usual situation all students are speaking, (“we all kind of contribute”). In my field notes I recorded that this is not the case. The African American girls spoke more to each other than to the class as a whole. Who is the “we” in Allie’s response? If she is speaking for all of the class, her statement is not accurate. Allie’s qualification, the “kind of” in “we all *kind of* contribute” changes her statement and suggests that perhaps Allie herself recognizes that not everyone has been equally contributing to class discussion. Perhaps the “we” refers to those who are contributing—i.e., herself, the white boys, and the two mixed-race boys. If that is so, then, we might conclude that her command, “Now don’t get offended” might be directed to the African American girls in the classroom. If those girls do not agree that they are part of the “all” and as free to contribute as others are, then they may indeed have cause to be offended by Allie’s presentation of the classroom as not visually showing any racial differences.

Allie continues to construct her own view of what is usual and not usual in the classroom. In the next sentence she appears to agree with my assertion that the present

silence is unusual. She says, “It’s not any -- like dead silent.” This implies that the usual description of the classroom is not “dead silent” (as is the case during the privilege walk). Allie’s choice of words is interesting—*dead* silent. It is a cliché term, to be sure, but one that I believe accurately describes the atmosphere—but what has died? In this excerpt the silence has been described as unusual, awkward (as Allie repeats in the next line), and now dead.

In the next lines, Allie switches pronouns from *we* to *they*: “knowing -- and every time someone took a step backward, you knew that they were -- it was like a worse-off situation or that they had been through something else that you haven’t experienced.” The “they” in this case, are the students at the back of the privilege walk. For each step these students took backward, Allie gained some knowledge, knowledge that they were in a “worse-off situation” than herself and “had been through something else that you haven’t experienced,” In this line she seems to show some empathy for students in the back. There is an interesting change of pronouns here too. Where we might expect Allie would compare these instances of “worse off situations”—a phrase I find euphemistic for discrimination—to herself using first person, she actually switches to “you.” Does this mean that Allie has taken it upon herself to speak for the privileged students in the class?

Allie’s assertion<sup>28</sup> that the situation “visually shows us the racial differences in our classroom” is an interesting one because in the sketch of the customary seating arrangement prior to this day, racial differences are already quite visual: all of the African American girls sit together at the back of the classroom. Perhaps because this seating arrangement is both voluntary and “reasonable” given the racial climate of the school, the

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<sup>28</sup> Allie is not visible on the videotape as she speaks, so there are no comments on her body movements.

phenomenon is not visible to students. As is pointed out in Tatum's work, it is easier not to notice that black students are sitting together in the cafeteria (or to attribute it to other reasons) because to do so would mean one would have to acknowledge the racism that shapes this seating arrangement. Because there is no visible external agent positioning the African American students in this way, Foucault's theory of spatial positioning as a disciplining technique is useful. Quite possibly the African American girls have internalized racism to the degree that they self-position themselves in the classroom in a segregated, and (by choosing the back of the classroom) low-status, manner. It is interesting that Allie says, "it is visual." Her emphasis on the visual suggested to me that I needed to look more carefully at the visual elements of the videotape, rather than getting caught up in just the written transcription of the spoken discourse.

The use of Critical Discourse Analysis helps illuminate social consciousness and critique. My focus on the possibilities of embedded privilege in Allie's discourse is overtly political, seeking to explore the racial and class differences in the classroom and how a kind of colorblindness keeps privileged students like Allie from seeing the inequities in her own classroom. I also pay careful attention to the silences and hesitations that could be indicative of a kind of colormuteness or aversion to talking about race for the political purpose of maintaining the status quo.

Pedagogically, it is worth noting that the discussion during the privilege walk activity is an example of "mutual responsibility for learning" among students and between students and teachers, a hallmark of culturally relevant pedagogy.

## ***Spatial and visual analysis***

As I “entextualized” the data from the videotapes, I also entextualized visual images—gestures, movements, proximity, semes/forms—because they were relevant to the communication events that were occurring. One of the “challenging questions” Ricki Goldman (2006) poses is what could researchers discover while working with video that they would not find if they were not working with this medium? This question was useful for orienting me to new research possibilities as I analyzed my video data. In doing a preliminary analysis, I found myself going straight to the transcripts of my videotapes and using the process of discourse analysis (modeled in the previous section). It occurred to me that for the kind of analysis I was engaging in at that moment, an audio recording might have sufficed. However, in the early stages of analysis—discovering a rich case and then creating an event map of instances relevant to that case—I found that what was happening spatially was significant to changes in student and teacher discourse during the unit.

Professor Lesley Rex’s mapping of interactional spaces (2006) was a useful starting place for what I wanted to describe. Her examples of interactional spaces are teacher talking to student, student talking to student, etc. But in my study, I think there might be a significant difference between these interactions depending on the spatial positioning of the speakers. The reason I think this is because the “privilege walk” seemed to be transformational for the students, and they themselves commented on how the visual aspect of the activity was significant to them. Even before students began to position themselves spatially according to the facilitator’s directions, they positioned themselves socially. I discovered this by accident as I was fast-forwarding through the

videotape to refine the language of my transcript. What I noticed in fast-forwarding is that when the facilitator asked the students to make two lines because of the small space of the classroom, all the white males stood in the front line. This struck me as interesting because the whole point of the privilege walk activity is to make visible white privilege, to raise student consciousness about their positions in society. Here was an example of visible white male privilege, yet no one commented on it in class, and I was well into my data analysis before I ever noticed, a testament to the invisibility of privilege.

Furthermore, there was a significant change in both the verbal and spatial positioning of students after this particular day. Broadly speaking, the group of five African American girls who sat together at the back of the classroom and rarely spoke in class, spread out and moved to the front of the class and began contributing more to whole-class discussion. Once I knew I wanted to consider the spatial elements, I went back to look at the videotapes (as opposed to transcripts of the videos) to see what was going on spatially in the classroom. I discuss these spatial changes in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I have explained my methodological approaches, focusing on the culture of the research site and participants, including the context of colormuteness and colorblindness that was being challenged by race issues during the time of the study. I identified the phases of the project, and explained the ethical influences on my methodological choices—reciprocity, respect, friendship, responsibility, and reflexivity.

Participatory Action Research influenced the way I entered the project and how I positioned myself as a researcher. That is, I became involved in the day-to-day working of the classroom and assisted the teacher in everyday teaching responsibilities from planning lessons, to grading papers, and everything in-between, including mundane tasks

like making photocopies, gathering teaching materials, running errands, etc. PAR positioning unintentionally morphed into friendship as method, and as I began data analysis, readings in friendship as methodology caused me to look at my data differently, to see the quality of it as related to this evolution of my methods—first PAR and then friendship as methodology.

The overall trajectory of the research project follows Grounded Theory; I started with a general question and sub-questions related to the problems I had identified in a literature review about the challenges of teaching NA/AI literatures, but once a rich or telling case emerged (the one analyzed in this chapter), I focused my data analysis on the issues—race, gender, silence—raised by this activity and the incident (the “powder keg” day) that made the intervention of the privilege walk necessary. In turn, this analysis led me to a reformulating of my research questions (this is demonstrated most clearly in Chapter Four), which led to additional analysis. The flexibility of a Grounded Theory approach allows, if I may return to the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter, a Freirian following of the silenced “as the masters of inquiry into the underlying causes of the events in their world.” If my research were to be truly a “means of moving them beyond silence into a quest to proclaim their world,” I would need more critical tools. Preliminary analysis of the data suggested that I needed to move away from Conversation Analysis and focus more on Critical Discourse Analysis. I see CDA as a more discrete method under the larger trajectory of Grounded Theory. My training in video analysis led me to analyze not just the spoken discourse but the spatial elements of my videotapes, and—following the broad codes of race, gender, and silence—I began to consider what we can see in the video related to them. That is why I am calling my visual analysis

Critical Spatial Analysis (CSA) to give a more critical and deeper view of the cultural dynamics of the classroom during a Native American unit of study (see Chapter Four). I see CSA as working in concert with CDA, both under Grounded Theory, which describes the overall flow of the research project and the relationship between data analysis and the research questions.

Because I have been concerned with the understanding gap of teacher and students throughout this project, and because I have included student written work and the teacher's written reflection for the purpose of triangulation (and hence, validity), I have coded written work for understanding, using Wiggins and McTighe's six-facet model (2005) as my original codes, and this is reported in Chapter Four.

Earlier in this chapter I modeled how I analyze a section of videotape using CDA and, to a limited extent, CSA. However, it is important to know that the particular event I took this sample analysis from—the privilege walk day—was an intervention to address an impasse that the students and teacher came to over issues of race early in the Native American unit. So, while much of this dissertation follows a somewhat narrative, and therefore chronological, structure, for the purpose of illustrating my analysis, I jumped ahead in the order of events. In Chapter Three I return to the beginning of the Native American unit. Just as one finds in the literature about teaching NA/AI literatures, Liz Turner's authority was challenged. In the following chapter, I explore how the teacher managed her authority and the effect this had on student understanding.

### Chapter Three

## Authority as a Potential Teacher Affordance in Bridging the “Understanding Gap” of Non-Native Students

*So all who hide too well away must speak and tell us where they are. –Frost<sup>29</sup>*

In the introduction, I outlined issues of authority surrounding the teaching (and publishing) of NA/AI literatures. I also described the inroads that NA/AI literatures have made into the canon of Western Literature commonly taught in schools and described some of the impediments that hamper the teaching of NA/AI literatures: student reactions of anger, hostility, and confusion, as well as a lack of pedagogical infrastructure to help teachers mediate the understanding gap of non-Native students reading NA/AI literatures. In the chapter on methodology, I described the particular context of this classroom, school, and community.

Students in Liz Turner’s third-period class tended to be more active in discussion and apt to challenge the teacher and each other. Given the potential for conflict, perhaps it is not surprising that this research project almost ended on the first day that the students were reading *Wynema* in class. I was out of town for a professional conference when I received an e-mail message from Liz Turner, in which she describes the day as a “powder keg.” The tensions in the class were so intense that she wanted to quit teaching the book. One sentence from the message stood out: “[A]lthough I have power and authority over my students as an African-American female teacher, the fact remains that Chuck, Brandon, and Carl’s remarks come from a place of white male privilege.” (L. Turner, personal communication, March 25, 2006). The teacher’s concerns about authority in this charged instance and at other times in the project led me—using the Grounded Theory

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<sup>29</sup> Quote painted above the door to Liz Turner’s classroom at Rainfield High School.

approach—to look carefully at authority. It is significant that the teacher and students came to an impasse on this particular day and that the teacher defined the conflict in terms of power and authority. It invites one to consider how Liz Turner’s enactment of authority on this day compares to the ways in which she enacted it over the semester as a whole. Given the discussion of textual authority in the introduction, I will consider the significance of the fact that the crisis of authority occurred during a Native American literatures unit. Finally, I will consider how Liz Turner’s use of her authority helped students bridge their understanding gap about NA/AI literatures. I will first discuss authority from a theoretical perspective, then analyze how authority was functioning in Liz Turner’s classroom.

In the message cited above, Liz Turner does not just reference her authority, but also her power, so the question arises, what is the difference between authority and power, or is there a difference? Weber (1947), whose work is commonly cited in education, defines authority as “the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons” and power as “the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests” (152). Authority is only a “probability” not a certainty. Pace, who studied classrooms specifically, found that enactments of authority are “complex and ambiguous” and provides this basic definition: “classroom authority expresses the legitimacy of teachers’ directives and their connection to the school’s responsibility to educate students for individual and social good” (2003; 1561, 1560). This definition suggests that authority does not automatically come with the role of teacher, that there has to be “legitimacy” for

the teachers' directives to be followed. The definition also implies a connection between that legitimacy and the larger mission of schools: "to educate students for individual and social good."

So, while a teacher has a "legitimate right to command" in her classroom, that does not mean that she will be granted obedience, or consent, for authority does rest on consent (Barnard, 1950; Pace and Hemmings, 2006). When it comes to grades, however, a teacher does have more than an authority to assign grades to students. When assigning grades, the teacher is can carry out his or her own will even if students are resisting (no consent is needed) therefore, it is a power (Weber, 1947). When a teacher gives an assignment, she is exercising her authority as a classroom teacher to give assignments. Students may or may not choose to turn in the assignment on time (or at all) as requested. When a teacher grades an assignment, she is exercising power.

Weber laid out "Three Pure Types" of legitimate authority, arguing that the validity of claims to legitimacy may be based on the following grounds: rational, traditional, and charismatic.

1. Rational grounds—resting on a belief in the 'legality' of patterns of normative rules and the right of those elevated to authority under such rules to issue commands (legal authority);
2. Traditional grounds—resting on an established belief in the sanctity of immemorial traditions and the legitimacy of the status of those exercising authority under them (traditional authority); and
3. Charismatic grounds—resting on devotion to the specific and exceptional sanctity, heroism, or other exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him (charismatic authority). (1947; 328)

To this model, Pace adds professional expertise as another category and creates the following table which shows the connection between these social theories, educational ideologies, and curriculum models (Pace; 2003, 1561):

Figure 3.1. Theories of authority

Social Theory on Authority	Educational Ideology on Authority	Curriculum Model
Traditional Legal-rational Expert professional Absence of authority (egalitarian)	Conservative Bureaucratic Progressive Radical	Humanist Social efficiency Developmental Social meliorist

Professional expertise emerged in the 1960s as a way of limiting teacher authority to educational matters rather than the broader in loco parentis approach of the legal-rational grounds of authority conceived of by Weber. Pace drops the charismatic grounds from her table, but I would argue that this model is still salient. Charismatic grounds can be seen in the model of the “award winning” teacher who connects with students on a personal basis.

What is missing from these models of authority is a consideration of race and culture. Notions of teacher authority “become problematic within various contexts when acted upon uncritically” (Jackson and Solis, 1995). Race, especially, impacts classroom authority (Delpit, 1988). In the black community, a teacher earns authority through “exhibition of personal power, establish[ing] meaningful/ interpersonal relationships that garner student respect; exhibit[ing] a strong belief that all students can learn, establish[ing] a standard of achievement and push[ing] students to achieve that standard, and hold[ing] the attention of students by incorporating interactive features of black communicative style in his or her teaching” (Delpit, 2006; 36).

Depending on the race of the teacher and the race of students, the legitimacy of teacher authority may be questioned or affirmed. For example, a white teacher teaching an all-black class may have legitimate classroom authority when her students perceive

her as a “reverse Oreo” (white on the outside and black on the inside) (Rex & Jordan, 2005). As this example suggests, classroom authority is socially constructed, or as Metz conceived it, negotiated by both students and teacher in the classroom and in the larger school community (1978).

Classroom authority has also been connected to curriculum, especially in the eyes of progressives, who see the teacher’s role as guiding “students’ discovery and growth, by designing an environment and activities and making judicious interventions to support these processes (Kliebard, 1986; Metz, 1978)” (as cited Pace, 2003; 1562). Liz Turner’s “judicious intervention” is the privilege walk, which supported students in looking more critically at race in the classroom and in the literature. Critical theorists look at “classroom relations as instantiations of dominance in which claims to knowledge are used to legitimize authority and marginalize subordinated groups” (Pace, 2003; 1563). However it is conceived, there is widespread consensus that “Authority is inextricably linked with teaching and learning in classrooms (Grant, 1981; Metz 1978)” (as cited in Pace 2003; 1580).

Authority is affected by gender as well as by race. Some argue that women in particular “construct power rather than assume or usurp it” (Noblit, 1993; 37). Feminists argue that “female teachers need to reclaim professional authority, while critically examining with students both power and authority in light of race, class, and gender (Ellsworth, 1989; Luke, 1996)” (Pace, 2003; 1563). In his study of a powerful African American teacher, Noblit asserts: “For powerful women, it may be that there is no important distinction between power and authority. Power that is socially constructed is socially legitimated. It may lack legal basis, charisma, or even the full force of tradition,

but it is moral authority nonetheless” (Noblit, 1993; 37). Durkheim (1956) envisioned moral authority as a higher influence on behavior. Metz (1978) conceived of a moral order as something to which both teachers and students owe allegiance. Providing guidance to students on the moral order of their shared world is a teacher’s responsibility.

But what if a vision of a “shared world” is contested? Exercising moral authority on topics that have been suppressed or people who have been oppressed may not be obvious to mainstream teachers. And on the subject of Native American issues, it can take some effort to figure out how to present that moral authority, for authority is a contested topic in Native American studies. With centuries of colonization, genocide, and assimilation, Native American peoples understandably are wary of further oppression through academic means. The history of how Native American topics were addressed in American schools is a painful one—from corporal punishment of students speaking their Native languages to suppression of Native stories considered “witchcraft” to negative stereotypes in literature, and even well-meaning, but nonetheless patronizing practices around the teaching of Native literatures (e.g., “playing Indian” in the classroom while reading a Native American work (Burlingame, 2005)). With such a contested history, it is perhaps not surprising that many English teachers simply avoid teaching NA/AI works, as was discussed in Chapter One. However, with the multicultural movement in education has come greater acceptance of NA/AI literatures, and these works increasingly appear on school curricula, on lists of “acceptable” works to teach in an English department, in textbooks, and even as a possible choice on the Advanced Placement literature exam that students in all states can take and, if the College Board and their

university of choice deem their score high enough, opt out of their first year writing course at college.<sup>30</sup>

### ***Liz Turner's enactment of authority***

Liz Turner links the terms of power and authority with each other in this sentence from her e-mail message to me about the “powder keg” day in her class, a day that made her want to quit teaching *Wynema*: “Although I have power and authority over my students as an African-American female teacher, the fact remains that the [boys’] remarks come from a place of white male privilege.” She does the same in her message in response to my request for clarification: “in the space of the classroom, vested in the role of teacher, I have a semblance of power and authority over everyone in the role of student, even those who are white and male” (personal communication, March 25, 2006). Liz Turner does have both power and authority—the power to grade students, to send them to the media center, to decide what the assignments will be. However, her classroom authority is only probable in that it is constructed between Liz and the students in this particular “space,” a classroom. In analyzing her comments, I wish to focus on that which is constructed between Liz and her students, her authority, which I describe as contextual, positional, and dynamic.

Liz Turner’s authority is contextual—it is constructed primarily in the space of the classroom. I say “primarily” because she does have some potential authority outside

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<sup>30</sup> Question 3 on the 2006 AP English literature exam listed Momaday’s *House Made of Dawn* and Silko’s *Ceremony* alongside more typically canonical works such as Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and *The Winter’s Tale* as possible choices for students to use in answering this question: “Many writers use a country setting to establish values within a work of literature. For example, the country may be a place of virtue and peace or one of primitivism and ignorance. Choose a novel or play in which such a setting plays a significant role. Then write an essay in which you analyze how the country setting functions in the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot. You may choose a work from the list below or another appropriate novel or play of similar literary merit.”

of the classroom as well. That is, if she sees students outside of the classroom (though still on school grounds), and they recognize her as having a legitimate right to command, she could say, for example, “Don’t break that bottle in the parking lot,” and the student involved in this action might choose to obey her if the student recognizes her right to command as legitimate. Outside of the context of the school, she doesn’t have the same authority: her race and gender may be read more easily than her profession.

In addition to being contextual, Liz Turner’s authority is also positional in that her “role” as teacher gives her control “over everyone who is in the role of student” in the classroom, as she so clearly put it. Looking carefully at her choice of words here, she says she has a “semblance” of power and authority over students in the classroom, “even those who are white and male.” The qualifier “semblance” suggests that the power and authority she holds are not real. Liz Turner qualified her original statement about power with the phrase “as an African American female.” And the other qualifier, “even” shows that it is especially unexpected that she would have power and authority over white male students. Certainly, outside of the classroom, in the larger society, Liz Turner’s authority with regard to white males is minimal.

Finally, I would argue that Liz’s classroom authority is dynamic due to its contextual and positional nature as well as the way it is negotiated and socially constructed; whereas, classroom power is not. Therefore, although Liz Turner uses both words—power and authority—together, what I am primarily interested in analyzing is authority and the complex and dynamic ways in which it is enacted in this classroom for the purpose of student understanding, keeping in mind there are multiple sources of legitimacy.

I argue that there is yet another source of legitimacy: cultural legitimacy. Liz Turner exercises her classroom authority on the basis of her legitimacy as a woman of color. Indeed, her quote from above, “Although I have power and authority over my students *as an African-American female teacher...*” indicates her self-awareness that this can be a source of legitimacy. As a member of multiple oppressed groups, she has a valuable perspective when the topic under study deals with race and oppression. While Liz Turner mentions her gender and African American identification, it is significant that she is also of Native American ancestry, a third oppressed group, though she seldom refers to it. All three of these identities potentially lend a cultural legitimacy to her authority in the classroom, though potentially identity can both detract from and add to classroom authority.

One way that Liz Turner enacts authority based on cultural legitimacy is by using her command of African American vernacular to connect with one of the female, African American students in her class whose attention she wanted to redirect to class activities:

T: Girl, put those away.

F: I am.

T: OK, don't go “I am.” Just do it (chuckles). Don't have to be no fight.

Addressing the student as “girl,” the use of double negatives, and lack of subject/verb agreement mark this exchange as that of a different register, African American Vernacular (AAV). The student responded positively to her admonition.

In the case of the classroom I studied at Rainfield High School, Liz Turner's enactment of her authority as a public school teacher, as an African American woman, as someone with Native American ancestry, as someone who grew up in an urban

environment, and as a doctoral student/budding researcher is complex and strongly tied to student understanding about Native American issues and about students' own racial and cultural identities. The teacher tapped into a complex array of sources of legitimacy—especially cultural legitimacy—to enact her authority during the Native American unit. To understand how powerful cultural legitimacy is for Liz Turner, it is useful to first explore her status in regard to professional expertise.

***The legitimacy of professional expertise: When previous experience with Native American/American Indian literatures in the classroom is limited***

One of the factors influencing the dynamics of authority is legitimacy. When a teacher claims content knowledge, she is using professional expertise as the source of legitimacy for her authority. In Liz Turner's case, she brought very little knowledge of NA/AI literatures to the unit, so this was not a likely source of legitimacy for her authority. However, her students also had very little experience studying NA/AI literatures, so, in a sense, the playing field was level.

When Ms. Turner got her first teaching job, she found Leslie Marmon Silko's novel *Ceremony* was on the curriculum, but she says, "I didn't end up teaching it because I didn't have enough time to read it. My chair gave it to me maybe in September; I just didn't have enough time to read it" (personal communication, January 11, 2006). When asked, in our initial interview, if she taught any other NA/AI works in her six years of teaching, she said, "I think this may be my first experience, honestly." When I asked her how she felt about starting to teach the unit, she said, "I'm interested in exploring the topic, and learning along with my students. That's the kind of teacher I am." Her

openness to “learning along with her students” translated into a particular way of handling her authority in the classroom, that is, a propensity to share authority with students, one of the patterns that arose from an analysis of classroom discourse.

In the initial interview with Liz Turner, we explored the challenge of teaching NA/AI literatures together. In her own education, her “reading of Native American literature had been limited to, maybe, a few short stories and legends. And of those short stories and legends, none of them were written from the Native American perspective” (personal communication, January 11, 2006). Liz Turner said, “I know a lot about western literature and a lot about African American literature, but I don’t know much about other peoples of color, including Native Americans” (personal communication, January 11, 2006). Later in the interview, Liz Turner elaborated on how Native Americans were presented: “westernized, fetishized, you know, Pocahontas’s view” (personal communication, January 11, 2006). Although she did not have experience with specific works of Native American literature, these remarks show her knowledge of the framework of culturally relevant pedagogy. She is sensitive to the essentialization of Native Americans, a sensitivity perhaps arising from her own lived experiences as a woman of color. In a paper she wrote later, she explains, “Because of my positioning as a woman of color in the classroom, I felt an extra responsibility to incorporate multicultural topics into classroom teaching”<sup>31</sup> (Turner, 2007; 1).

What makes Ms. Turner atypical is that she is African American and her great grandmother was a full-blooded Indian, possibly Creek or Cherokee. She finds her lack of experience with NA/AI literatures “problematic and a little bit troublesome” as well as

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<sup>31</sup> This quote is not from my original data set, but rather a paper Liz Turner wrote using the data I collected. In this paper she wrote for one of her own graduate courses, Liz Turner analyzed her own classroom discourse.

something of an “embarrassment.” She came to the project with an understanding of post-colonial studies and an acknowledgement that young adult literature often presents a view of “the other” as “objectified,” “a-historical,” and “essentialized” (personal communication, January 11, 2006). Given the contentious representation of teaching Native American literatures in the literature (reviewed in Chapter One), a complex and sophisticated way of handling her authority, given her lack of experience, was key to student understanding.

At the same time that she downplayed her actual experience with Native American topics, she also invoked her knowledge of cultural issues and differences. For example, there was a fight outside her classroom door, and students were distracted by it. Liz Turner asked her students, “Why are you so interested in conflict? . . . When we study Native American culture, we’ll find something different with different attitudes toward violence.” She then talked about the movie *Crash*, compared it to *Romeo and Juliet*, and went on with having students view and discuss a fight scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Once she stopped the video and said, “Native American cultures—cause there’s more than one—think of masculinity differently. What is Friar Lawrence saying?” Here she slips in an important concept in the field of Native American studies: the importance of not lumping all the distinct tribal groups into one. Examples like these show that Liz Turner has some ambivalence about her authority with regard to Native American issues.

To sum up, in many respects Ms. Turner exemplifies the typical teacher of her generation—she read very few Native American works in her own education, and the approach had not been culturally responsive; she encountered NA/AI literatures on her curriculum when she first entered the teaching profession, but she did not actually teach

them—and she is open to learning about NA/AI literatures. That is, she did not bring much professional expertise specifically related to the teaching of Native American literatures, though she had professional expertise in teaching more canonical works and in managing a classroom.

Professional expertise is relative to the expertise of students. Only 2 of 20<sup>32</sup> students who completed the preliminary survey claimed any experience at all with NA/AI literatures. The following chart shows how students responded to the question, “Describe your previous experiences with Native American literature.”

*Figure 3.2.* Student survey: previous experiences with Native American literature

Students with no experience with Native American literature <b>(11 responses)</b>	Students who feel they have had some experience but don't remember it clearly or specifically <b>(4 responses)</b>	Students who left the question blank or wrote “I don't know.” <b>(3 responses)</b>	Students who have had experience with Native American literature <b>(2 responses)</b>
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One of the students with experience wrote, “I have read many books on Native American literature and have learned that Native Americans were treated poorly.” and the other wrote, “Well, I am slightly Native American, so everything in the Native American category that I have learned is about mandellas and other stereotypical stuff.” The first student had background knowledge that she could refer to when encountering *Wynema*. Although “treated poorly” is not very specific, and even euphemistic for someone who has read “many” books on Native American literatures, this student probably had more of a frame of reference for the issues in the novel.

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<sup>32</sup> Although there were 21 students in Ms. Turner's 3<sup>rd</sup> period class, only 20 responses were filled out.

The second writer claimed Native American background, though one wonders what it means to be “slightly” Native American. In the Native American world, claims to Native ancestry are often looked at skeptically. As Vine Deloria writes, “During my three years as Executive Director of the National Congress of American Indians, it was a rare day when some white didn’t visit my office and proudly proclaim that he or she was of Indian descent,” and furthermore, “All but one person I met who claimed Indian blood claimed it on their grandmother’s side. I once did a projection backward and discovered that evidently tribes were entirely female for the first three hundred years of white occupation” (1969; 2-3). Deloria asks, “Why is a remote Indian princess grandmother so necessary for many whites? . . . Is it an attempt to avoid facing the guilt they bear for the treatment of the Indians?” (1969; 4). Similarly, Gerald Vizenor censures writers like Hertha Dawn Wong and Jamake Highwater for their spurious claims to Native identity: “The racialism of these romantic notions would bear minimal honor in tribal communities” (1994; 61). Shari Huhndorf analyzes the racialism underlying these claims further: claiming Native ancestry or emulating Native practices, what Huhndorf calls “going native,” is “a means of constructing white identities, naturalizing the conquest, and inscribing various power relations within American culture” (2001; 6). In other words, it is problematic for those of the dominant culture to claim Native ancestry specifically in terms of power. That is, there is a difference between basing one’s authority in a classroom on true cultural legitimacy and basing it on spurious cultural claims to Native identity.

The kind of knowledge this student claimed is about “mandelas (sic) and other stereotypical stuff.” It would have been helpful if the student had been more specific

about the “stereotypical stuff,” but her knowledge seemed minimal because although the circle is important to many Native cultures, mandalas do not originate in Native American culture, but are of Hindu origin. But these two responses were the exception; the most common response was a lack of experience, with 11 responses out of 20 signaling no experience. An additional four students don’t remember their previous experiences clearly enough to provide a description, and three responses are left blank or the student does not know. Only two out of the 20 students responded in the affirmative, but the experiences they described—that Native Americans were treated poorly and about Mandalas and “other stereotypical stuff”—did not address the literature specifically. As a whole, the class can be described as inexperienced with NA/AI literatures. From my experiences as a high school English teacher and from casual conversations with other teachers, I would speculate that the inexperience of this class is typical.

Given that the students had little experience with NA/AI literatures, valued literature that interested them personally, and had such diverse favorite works of literature (see Appendices Ten and Eleven), what did they expect going into the unit? Student responses to question seven—presented in the following figure— shed some light on this question.

Figure 3.3. Question #7: If you have never read Native American literature before, describe your expectations as we begin to read some in this unit

Positive, general (3 responses)	Positive, specific (5 responses)	neutral (4 responses)	negative (2 responses)	no response (5 responses)
I'm excited	I expect personification	I hope it's just something I can relate to	It's going to be a bit confusing and complicated	blank
something interesting	I hope it will be interesting and not boring like Romeo and Juliet	I don't think it will be too hard, but I think that there will be some challenge	so far I do not like Wynema, it has not grabbed my attention at all	blank
I think it will catch my interest	rewarding by learning someone else's culture	I haven't done much on Native American history and I expect to just go over the stereotypes of native Americans.		blank
	I expect it to be slightly wise and informative	To know that they live in a tribe, tell fairytales/myths, give each other weird names that means something great.		I don't think I have
	I was hoping for insight on Native American Reviews			illegible

Expectations vary, so it is difficult to make generalizations, but it appears from the above table that one-fourth of the students were not sure what to expect because they left the question blank (or perhaps they were just getting tired of filling out the survey). The majority of responses were blank, positive, or neutral. Only two responses can be classified as negative. One student read ahead in the book and had already decided it did not grab her interest. The other expected confusion and complication. The teacher read

these surveys prior to starting the unit and so would have had a sense of what potential challenges to her authority might be: students seeing her choice of literature as boring “does not grab my interest,” student propensity to stereotype Native American people as “wise” or having “weird names,” and/or a lack of interest.

From the moment I began studying this classroom, Liz Turner started downplaying her authority with regard to NA/AI literatures. In an early interview, she emphasized her lack of experience to me. But she also was forthright about her lack of experience in classroom conversations with her students. Near the end of the Shakespeare unit she said, “I don’t know much about Native Americans; I’ll be learning along with you.” When students were working on their background reports, she said, “You’re the expert on this. I know nothing about that period.” Although Liz Turner did not have the professional expertise necessary to use it as a legitimate basis for her authority, her identity as an African American/Native American woman did establish her authority, based on cultural legitimacy, with students.

Liz Turner used professional expertise in terms of pedagogical (versus content) knowledge, on the first day of the Native American unit, a library research day. Students were reading background information on a variety of topics related to the novel *Wynema*. When Liz Turner reminded the students to read the introduction to *Wynema* for homework, Jeff, a white male student challenged the assignment: “Why do we have to read all that?” Liz Turner’s response is interesting not just because of the way she handled her authority in this instance but also for her acknowledgment of the new space occupied by both the students and herself:

I’ve never read Native American literature before. Many of you haven’t. Well, one of the things I was going to say, Jeff. Since you asked the question, I want

to answer it. One of the things I was going to say is that usually when I teach *Romeo and Juliet*, before we go into the book we read that full introduction. This time I did it in the middle, and I think I saw some differences. You know, remember questions that people had on the test. And I just think that sometimes it's very helpful for us to sort of orient ourselves because it is unfamiliar territory for many of us, including the teacher.

In analyzing this passage, we see that in Liz Turner's response to Jeff's question she again acknowledges her own lack of expertise on Native American literature. By saying, "I've never read Native American literature before. Many of you haven't" she positions herself alongside her students in "unfamiliar territory." The teacher signals that just as they are occupying a different physical space by coming to the library, they will be occupying a different position in regard to the subject matter. She also invokes her experience as a teacher—she didn't have them read background information at the beginning of the Shakespeare unit, and students struggled on the test. She learned from the experience and plans to do things differently here. While enacting authority based on genuine professional expertise and being honest about the content knowledge she lacks, she responds effectively to Jeff's challenge. That is, he seemed satisfied and dropped further challenges to her authority. Her basis for authority is different when she works with an African American student on this same day. I will analyze this passage in the next section.

### ***Tapping into cultural legitimacy: Modeling critical thinking as key to student understanding***

Throughout the unit, Liz Turner authorized talk about race in the classroom, starting from the first day when she helped Lyric, an African American/Caucasian boy in the library with his background report on Wounded Knee.

1 T: Ok. Lyric, are you finding what you need? You're not? There's  
2 nothing about the Indian Wars in that book? Really? Have you  
3 checked the index?  
4 Lyric: Yes.  
5 T: That's really interesting. Well, . . . one of the things that you can  
6 say about that in your research is this: Think about the reasons  
7 why it's not in the book about Indian Wars. This is an event so  
8 terrible. Was this Wounded Knee? Why is it on on-line, but not in  
9 history books published... You know, go get the Indian Wars book  
10 back because this may be interesting. Sometimes research isn't  
11 just about what you find. It's about what they don't put in books.  
12 You know, as a young African-American man, that's something  
13 that you probably can relate to, and I can relate to, right? So they  
14 don't write down everything that happens in the books. Let's find  
15 the copyright date of this. It looks like it's pretty old, personally.  
16 Let's look at this... 1978. Oh, this is fascinating.

In this passage, Lyric has indicated that he is not finding what he needs to prepare his background report on Wounded Knee. Liz Turner takes this as an opportunity to build her authority, not based on professional expertise, but on cultural and moral legitimacy. She takes a critical approach as she encourages Lyric to think about why he can't find the information he needs. In Lines 2-3, Liz asks, "Have you checked the index?" a move that does rest on professional expertise; Liz Turner is the teacher and teachers know how to use books to find information. However, when she determines that Lyric has already pursued this option, she takes a more critical approach, asking him to think with her "why it's [information about Wounded Knee] not in the book about Indian Wars"? She also enacts a slightly different version of professional expertise, this one drawing more from her position as doctoral student/critical researcher than from her position as a teacher, when she says, "Sometimes research isn't just about what you find. It's about what they don't put in books" (ll. 8-9). Recognizing that it might be difficult for a student, accustomed to more conventional kinds of authority, to buy into the concept that research

is also about what one *doesn't* find, she also enacts a kind of cultural legitimacy to bolster her authority: "You know, as a young African-American man, that's something that you probably can relate to, and I can relate to, right? So they don't write down everything that happens in the books" (ll. 9-11). In these lines she has recognized Lyric's identity "as a young African-American man" and aligned herself with him in suggesting they in particular can "relate" to things being left out of history books. The unspoken assumption here is that Lyric understands, as Liz Turner does, that much of African American history has been suppressed in history books. Significantly, she says it is "they" who don't write everything that happens in the books, and this choice of pronoun separates her from the authors of the books in the school library. Here, Liz Turner expressly rejects the kind of legal-rational legitimacy she might claim by aligning herself with those who produce knowledge, claiming instead a cultural legitimacy as an African American. Liz also enacts a kind of moral authority when she comments, "This is an event so terrible" (ll. 6-7). There is an unspoken moral judgment on authors who would leave out such a terrible event from their textbook. In continuing contrast to the "they" who would suppress information in this way, Liz aligns herself with Lyric in finding out why this has happened; twice she says "Let's" emphasizing the first person plural and characterizes their work together as "fascinating." Though not the case for the teacher Noblit studied, Liz Turner does hold a kind of moral authority with her students, and the basis for it is cultural. She acts as a kind of emotional guide for her students as they encounter the traumatizing effects of the United States' genocidal policies toward Native Americans/American Indians. The particular kind of authority, one resting on cultural legitimacy, constructed in this classroom appears to be effective in helping this particular

non-Native student bridge his understanding gap about Native American/American Indian literatures and issues.

In the following segment of transcript, Liz Turner continues talking with Lyric, who has been joined by his research partner. Lyric, with whom she established a connection in the previous section begins responding to her questions in a way that shows he has accepted her basis for authority as legitimate.

- 1 T: Ok, let's go back. Boys, I thought of a really interesting tack that  
2 you guys can take about this. You can talk about this in your  
3 handout or presentation. This is going to be fascinating. Have a  
4 seat. For some reason, there's this huge event that happens... look  
5 at where 370 Native Americans lay dead. But in a book called,  
6 History, The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars there  
7 is nothing mentioned published in 1978. . . Think about this.  
8 Ok, The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars what does  
9 that say about the Indian Wars? Does this sound very official?  
10 [haughtily] The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars.  
11 Lyric: It doesn't say "Native Americans."  
12 T: Well, ok. I agree with you. First of all, you have no  
13 acknowledgement of Native Americans in that title. Also, you  
14 have The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars now does  
15 that sound like, you know, the selective history of the Indian Wars  
16 or we don't include everything? Doesn't this title sound pretty...  
17 what word am I looking for?  
18 Lyric: Stupid.  
19 T: Stupid? Well, maybe not "stupid" but ok, for instance there's a  
20 dictionary that has this name, right? The American Heritage  
21 Dictionary. Think about a source. I want you to do some thinking  
22 here because you're about to have one of the best reports because  
23 we've just found something... a dirty little secret about some of  
24 the books... the official books that we have. That's the word I was  
25 looking for. "Official," right? Doesn't this sound really official?  
26 The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars. What does  
27 this title mean? Think about it? What does that title mean? That  
28 this is the American Heritage History of the Indian Wars?  
29 Lyric: Um, that Americans were here before...  
30 T: Oh, you're trying to think too, too deeply. Just think about the title  
31 and the fact that this is not included.  
32 Lyric: That's American history.

33 T: That's American history, but how come information about an  
34 Indian War is not included in this American...?  
35 Lyric: It was not a war, though, it was just like the Holocaust basically.  
36 T: Well, how come... isn't the Holocaust included in our discussion  
37 of World War II?  
38 Lyric: Because that war had to do with Germany.  
39 T: Right. But still, massacres... you can say the Holocaust wasn't a  
40 specific battle either but it's always mentioned. So the Holocaust  
41 is mentioned when we talk about World War II. In the American  
42 Heritage History of the Indian Wars it sounds pretty official, right?  
43 Lyric: Yes.  
44 T: Why would this particular incident, Wounded Knee, not be  
45 included? A genocide is sometimes a side note or something that  
46 happens during wars. How come, in 1977, the people publishing  
47 the American Heritage History of the Indian Wars decided not to  
48 include this information? And I think there's your report. I  
49 think that's very interesting. And I think your classmates will find  
50 that fascinating. And you can get a really good discussion going  
51 about it. Think about who includes official history books... 100  
52 years from now, what if the Internet blew up or something and all  
53 that was lost. Nobody knew this information because most  
54 Americans don't, and all we had left were books and  
55 this is the only record we had of what happened in the Indian  
56 Wars. Why is that problematic?  
57 Lyric: No one would know that this happened.  
58 T: Yeah. So ask yourselves... and I'll leave you with this last  
59 question: Why is this not included in this book?"  
60 Lyric: Because it's \_\_\_\_\_ ?  
61 T: Yes. And think about that. Think about that. Yeah, just think  
62 about it. You've got some good stuff here. This may be the best  
63 report if you work it right.

In the segment above, Liz Turner is continuing to work against the legitimacy of printed books as authoritative. She is questioning “the power of the publishers of textbooks to . . . determine the view of the world presented” (Delpit, 2006; 24). In fact, taking a critical, revisionist stance, she is encouraging the students to think carefully about why Wounded Knee is not included in the *American Heritage History of Indian Wars*. She calls the omission a “dirty little secret” (l. 23) as well as “problematic” (l. 56), continuing the line

of moral authority established in the previous segment. She encourages the students to follow her line of reasoning with the promise that it could lead to their report being the “best report” (ll. 22, 62-63). To get there, she emphasizes their need to “think” (ll. 21, 51, 61). Consistent with the cultural connection established with Lyric in the previous section, she does not discount his answers that don’t fit what she is looking for (“stupid” instead of “official” in l. 18 and “that Americans were here before” in l. 29). In the latter example, she says he was “thinking too deeply,” which, given the moral order she has set up, is really a virtue. It may seem to be a contradiction to tell Lyric he is thinking too deeply, but within the context—she is in the midst of helping him to think critically about why Wounded Knee is not in *The American Heritage History of the Indian Wars*—she prefers to help him save face for his difficulty in following her reasoning by attributing it to overly deep thinking, rather than simply being wrong. In this way she rewards Lyric for his efforts while encouraging him to keep thinking and delve deeper. It is interesting that although she does not have the content knowledge of Native American issues to establish her authority based on professional expertise, her cultural expertise—in this case knowing it takes a critical lens to uncover omissions in history textbooks that valorize the oppressor’s perspective of history—is more than a sufficient claim to legitimacy for her authority to be accepted by these students.

Critical pedagogy is highly concerned with power in education, so perhaps that is why Liz Turner’s critical and cultural strategies of pedagogy help her students bridge their understanding gap, as she does with Lyric in the previous example. Other ways in which she is using her skills as a culturally relevant teacher and critical teacher, as defined by Kincheloe (2004), are the following: Liz feels out the scope of her agency and

uses it, points to cultural assumptions hidden in texts, maintains a vision of social justice and equity, identifies the ideological underpinnings to her work as an educator, makes frequent comparisons between community and schooling, and considers the ways schooling affects the lives of students from marginalized groups.

In one of our conversations, Liz Turner reflected on her critical beliefs underlying her work, such as that with Lyric:

[T]eaching socially contentious – potentially socially contentious material is – can be fraught with difficulty in this sort of setting, because the students have a lot of knowledge, and they think – I think one of the things with third hour, a couple of the kids in third hour, they don't think they need any more, because they already know everything there is to know, or what they want to know about Native American literature. But knowledge without the tools of critical analysis is a dangerous thing, just like the critical analysis ability without a depth of knowledge is dangerous, too, in a different way. (personal communication, April 3, 2006)

With NA/AI literatures specifically, she doesn't believe that knowledge is enough. She also wants to empower her students with “the tools of critical analysis.” The exchange with Lyric above illustrates how her beliefs translate into classroom practice and her enactment of a kind of authority that rests on cultural and critical legitimacy.

Sometimes Liz Turner slipped in a brief comment that revealed her critical orientation. For example, during the Shakespeare unit, students ran across the word “pernicious.” Liz Turner said, “Pernicious—I love this word—I use it when I'm talking about inequity.” She then moved on to having students translate a line from Shakespeare into contemporary American English. This brief comment reveals her as a person who talks about inequity, a mark of a critical pedagogue.

Liz Turner enacted authority based on a kind of cultural legitimacy that was critical in orientation again when she devoted a day to discussing a revisionist text and

identifying the cultural assumptions hidden in the Little House on the Prairie texts. After reading the “Osage View of Little House on the Prairie,” by Dennis McAuliffe, a member of the Osage Nation, she sets the tone for discussion thus:

The first thought is that all nations have multiple histories. And I think our task in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is not to say who is right or who is wrong because I think we need to become comfortable with the point of view that there may be many rights and there may be many wrongs. But some histories are told and some are suppressed. Some are iconic and some are denigrated. And some become myths and legends of renown that *everybody knows* . . .

Here Liz Turner is guiding her students in understanding that there are multiple points of view and that some are suppressed historically. In a sense, she is continuing the work she began with Lyric on the library research day. She goes on to invoke her authority as an African American woman while continuing the critical train of thought she has initiated:

At first, when I first read this, I completely rejected it because I was like, “Oh, this guy’s just complaining or griping. But then, being a woman who was part of other groups myself, being African-American and being female, I know that my histories as a woman, you know, women’s history and the history of people of African descent has been suppressed. So I have to examine myself. Why am I getting so angry at him for saying this about one of my favorite books? I really got upset when I first read it. You know, because I was like... you know, he’s just... she was just a little girl... you know, whatever. But I have to examine my own reaction and my own prejudice.

Liz Turner’s framing of her own need to examine her prejudice can also be seen as an enactment of moral authority. She is essentially modeling a critical perspective for her students. She is also practicing reflexivity, one of the characteristics of culturally relevant teaching discussed in the previous chapter.

While she initially applies critical ideas to herself, she also makes a call to her students:

Yeah, so your generation needs to change these things. That's why we keep hammering this stuff into you because the adults are fixed. They're not going to ever change. As a matter of fact, the adults are trying to roll back the clock on a lot of issues. So your generation... you are the most... you are our hope in not just this area... a lot of other areas, too.

In statements like this Liz is encouraging students to develop their social consciousness, another feature of culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). By tapping into an array of CRP strategies, she is bolstering her own authority based on cultural legitimacy. Furthermore, her explicit call that the generation of students in front of her change things is her way of being what Anyon (1981) calls an agent of non-reproduction in a classroom.

### **Ambivalence about authority: Invoking/downplaying**

Liz Turner both invokes or asserts her authority and downplays it. Later in the unit, she devoted two days to the exploration of stereotypes and cultural practices. As she lead the students in a discussion aimed at defining culture, she asked, "Could you guys give me some insight?" When a different student than the one she called on asked to have the floor, she relents, saying, "I aim to please." She could be downplaying her authority here to bargain for greater student participation in the discussion, but her affect suggests that it is more than a rhetorical move; it is a genuine willingness to put herself in the role of student and learn from her class, to benefit from the students' "insight."

There are also disconfirming examples of the teacher downplaying her authority in regard to NA/AI literatures. While most instances do fall into the category of downplaying, there are times when her authority is specifically invoked. For example, on the day she brought in the aforementioned revisionist text based on the beloved children's books *Little House on the Prairie* called "Little House on the Osage Prairie," students got

distracted by the idea of their teacher reading the *Little House* books, she said, “Yeah, I am lame. Ha. Ha. I’m also the teacher who is going to be grading you on Monday.” In this line, she reminds students of her institutional authority—the power to grade their performance. She also laughs, which softens the possible perceived threat. Later in that same class, she invoked her authority as a person of Native American ancestry. Liz Turner had just asked me if I could think of any other questions to ask, and I mentioned the idea of home and what that means to people. Liz Turner responded thus:

Yeah, I just, you know, I just can’t even... not being Native... or not having kept connection to my Native American ancestry, which is only a very little bit.. I am one-eighth and a lot of... How many of you have Native American ancestry again? OK raise your hands. It’s interesting. So, not having kept touch with that ancestry, how many of you have kept touch with that ancestry and you really have been steeped?

The article she had just read is highly critical of the damaging representation of Indians in Wilder’s children’s books, calling them “unsuitable for children” because of the racism. In my experience, white students often react negatively to works like this, taking them personally, or emoting some form of white guilt. It was interesting that students did not react that way in this particular class, and perhaps it could be because the teacher came “out” as Native to the class right after finishing reading the article. She then called for others to come forth with their own Native background and complimented one of the students, who raises her hand, calling her comments “good and insightful” over the course of the unit. Keanna’s comments often centered around race, so by making this comment, Liz Turner authorized race talk in the class and used her authority to possibly preemptively quell any negative talk about “Little House on the Osage Prairie.”

## Exercising moral authority

Like the teacher in Noblit's (1993) study, Liz Turner exercises moral authority in the classroom. For example, on the third day of the unit, she showed the students a model of a handout from another class that included a picture of an Indian from Wounded Knee. While the explicit objective of showing the model was to help students prepare their own handouts for the following class, through her commentary about the photo on the handout, Liz Turner also modeled an emotional response to the photo:

...[T]his is so horrible because of two things. ...They showed the picture that demonstrated the real human sacrifice. It's a real human sacrifice. This is a human being who has died because of what our government chose to do. I can see it's really interesting because for you know first of all very interesting that they chose this picture because genocide is something that's so horrible.

Before explaining the photo, Liz Turner characterizes the photo as "horrible." In this quote, we see Liz Turner repeating the phrase "real human sacrifice" twice, and the word "human" three times. The repetition seems to drive home the point that the subject of the photo is human, and therefore relatable to the audience. Her choice to use the word "human" rather than "Indian" is calculated to get students to relate to the plight of the subject. She is continuing her cultural pedagogic project by doing the opposite of othering the Indian depicted in the photo. Liz Turner also assigns blame for the "human sacrifice": "This is a human being who has died because of what our government chose to do." This direct approach is highly authoritative and also critical.

In introducing the film *500 Nations* to students, Liz Turner was frank about her emotional response: "I must admit I had a really strong reaction to the very end of the Chief Joseph story . . . I just thought that was so touching. And I was hoping he'd have a happy ending. That's why I thought I hadn't heard of him. I thought it was because he

lived happily ever after.” Here, Liz Turner validates the emotions of students in the class who probably also hoped for a “happy ending.” (Student responses showed they had a similar emotional response.) In case any did not, Liz Turner is also teaching students what the fitting emotional response is to Chief Joseph’s story.

An important facet of Liz Turner taking on the role of moral authority in the classroom during the Native American unit is her talking about her emotive reactions to injustices. By revealing her feelings of horror about how American Indian people were treated by white settlers and soldiers, she acts as a moral compass for the class, guiding the students in an appropriate response. Given the argument she had with her students on the first day of the Wynema unit comparing the degree of horror in regard to the Holocaust versus in regard to slavery, it is notable that she persisted in sharing her emotive responses.

On the penultimate day of the unit, Liz Turner reflected back on the privilege walk while she and the students were trying to generate topics for the final essay. She said, “And the green sheet goes along with the privilege walk. We had some very interesting conversations first and second hours about it, so it was really interesting. But your class was the best of all. I did not cry in the other two classes. I even walked with the second hour and ended up at the blackboard, and I didn’t cry. But your class... I don’t know... It’s different.” What is interesting in this turn are the two statements adjacent to each other: “But your class was the best of all” and “I did not cry in the other two classes.” What is suggested by setting these two statements adjacent to each other is that their class was the best perhaps because she cried. Again, she is teaching students that it is good and proper to cry when one sees injustice.

## Shifting authority to students

Despite invoking her own authority as a teacher, as a person of Native American ancestry, and as a moral compass for the class, Liz Turner frequently did more than downplay her authority with students; sometimes she actively sought to share her authority with them. Schultz writes, “although teachers generally hold most of the power in teaching interactions, there are occasionally moments when the teacher hands that power and control over to students, as well as instances when they reclaim their authority” (2003; 5). Liz Turner frequently handed authority over to her students. In addition to the examples of putting students in leadership positions during a choral reading of the beginning of *Romeo and Juliet* and her positioning of Tay-Tay to discuss how he earns an A in the class (both incidents described in Chapter Two), another example of how Liz Turner positioned students as authorities was when students were discussing their answers to questions about the play as a whole. She said, “I’m ready to shut up and hear your opinions” and when a lively discussion that ensued began to flag, she said instead of her picking questions to discuss, she would have the students decide what to discuss next. During the Wynema unit, after students talked about stereotypes, she said, “Now I have to re-think my reading of Chapter 3.” All of these examples show Liz Turner’s willingness to share her authority with students. This approach continued beyond the Native American unit. During the Sandra Cisneros unit that followed this unit, Liz Turner continued to put students in positions of authority, such as when she asked Lyric to lead a discussion on immigration.

On the first day of the Native American unit, the dominant pattern in the way Liz Turner discursively positioned the students as she helped them with their assignment is

that of positioning them as researchers. She told one student, “You’re going to decide, as a researcher, what is most important for your audience to know.” To another student she said, “So *you* decide whether or not we need to know 15 facts about this or 10 facts. Why did you pick these facts?” While it is not surprising to find a pattern of references to research in a transcript of a class focused on doing research, what is notable about these references is the way the teacher takes many opportunities to position the students as experts on their topics. She emphasizes that the students are in charge of their choices: “So *you* decide whether or not we need to know 15 facts about this or 10 facts.” She is delegating some of her classroom authority to students through statements like this, but she is also retaining control. Liz Turner reveals she is knowledgeable when it comes to how to do research, by asking whether students have generated a research question. She both keeps students in charge of their work and guides them in how to be successful at their research.

Liz Turner also shares authority with her students when it comes to choosing the topics for their final exam near the end of the unit. She is trying to think of possible topics for their final essay.

- T: Ok well, I’m supposed to come up with one more [topic]. I know. I know. But I can’t think of one more. John, help me. What else was in the book?  
OK, we have stereotypes, history, romance, allotment, and what else.  
J: Education,  
T: Education. Duh, is the main focus of the book. I did talk about that, I know. And that is my profession, right?

This particular move to share authority with students, specifically John, is not a rhetorical move like the example above of asking for students to participate in discussion. In this

case, the teacher genuinely wants help. She needs topics for the final exam and is not feeling well (she is recovering from an asthma attack).

In the latter part of the class, when some groups have printed out their handout, the teacher helps one group with grammar. Again, she shifts her authority to the students, saying, “I know your classmates are pretty critical when it comes to language.” She does not position herself as the authority for whom the grammar must be correct, but positions the classmates there. As the grammar corrections continue, the teacher aligns herself with the student as a fellow writer who also struggles with spelling “You did a good job. Don’t worry about it. I have trouble spelling. I get back papers in my grad program with circled words that are misspelled. So please don’t feel badly about this. And we can change two more things. I think...are you ok with me capitalizing that?” By encouraging the student, empathizing, and asking permission before correcting capitalization, Liz Turner shows openness in sharing authority with students.

### **Supplementing student understanding**

Despite downplaying her authority and sharing authority with students, Liz Turner does not hesitate to authoritatively supplement student understanding with facts she knows. That is, she does not pretend not to know things for the sake of minimizing her authority. Here is an example of her filling in information for the class after a student group had given its presentation on the Dawes Act:

OK. There are a couple more steps in between the legal language of the Dawes Act, which I see you pulled from... which is great, and the visual that you have. And here is what the steps were: First of all, they didn’t just give Indian land to white people directly. They gave it to Indians first. That’s what the Dawes Act did. It allotted Indian lands and assigned it to Indians. When it says “each head of family” it’s “*Indian* head of family” ok. And then once that was done, some of these families they were hunter/gatherers. How are they going to get money to

pay taxes on that land? Very quickly, they couldn't. And the land was taken away. And then, it could be sold to white people through advertisements like this. So through other means too, like kind of tricking them out of it, and many other things were done to take that land away.  
So thank you very much. Thank you for taking my class.

First, she corrects the group's misapprehension about how the Dawes Act contributed to Indian land falling into the hands of whites. Then she clarifies the head of family as "Indian" head of family. She also explains the chain of events that would lead to Indians losing the land they were allotted and calls it "tricking" them, thereby invoking her moral authority again while explaining the facts. Her comment, "Thank you for taking my class" may be a self-conscious remark about how she has just stepped out of her normal way of interacting with the students to give a more traditional micro lecture.

Through these examples, I have presented a portrait of Liz Turner as someone who is comfortable downplaying her authority as well as invoking it, and as someone who regularly shares her authority with students. Therefore, it is surprising when her authority is threatened on the first day of the Wynema Unit, and her first reaction is extreme enough to make her consider not teaching the book.

### ***The "powder keg" day: a threat to teacher authority***

As I wrote at the beginning of this chapter, I first found out about the "powder keg" day through an e-mail message from Liz Turner because I was away at a professional conference.<sup>33</sup> I will include the message in its entirety here to show the range and depth of the issue and Liz Turner's reactions to it, but the focus in this chapter (in Chapter Five, I'll reconsider this message from a "friendship as methodology"

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<sup>33</sup> I had arranged for my husband to come videotape, which involved Liz Turner giving directions to him, but she didn't do it because she didn't want to "disturb" him. I was disappointed and wished I had planned things differently.

perspective) is on how her referencing of authority in this message led to an analysis of authority more generally in her classroom.

1 Date: Sat., 25 March 2006  
2 From: Liz Turner  
3 To: Kelly Sassi  
4 Subject: RE: How were Thurs. and Fri.?  
5

6 Dear Kelly:  
7

8 I hope your trip to Chicago went well. That's quite all right about the planning. I  
9 have some ideas because of the way Friday went.  
10

11 Thursday, as you know, I wasn't at school. Students finished up lit terms and did  
12 in-class reading.  
13

14 Friday, instead of the project presentations (which you said you wanted to see on  
15 Monday—and I didn't want to disturb Enrico), we discussed the Wynema  
16 introduction.  
17

18 For that, I combined techniques I learned from both [Professor's name] and  
19 [Another professor's name]. Students wrote for 15 min. on a passage they found  
20 memorable, and then we read the intro aloud together, "stopping" at interesting  
21 points and focusing on the language choices that the editor chose to give us the  
22 Callahan family's background.  
23

24 Third hour (your research focus class) discussion was a powder keg. One of the  
25 students, Ashae, said that someone had threatened her at lunchtime. Two other  
26 girls had to be sent to the Media Center because they chose not to participate  
27 (Keanna who skips class a lot, and Tasleem, who was mouthy on the day that [an  
28 administrator] came to observe.) Five minutes before the bell, Tasleem slammed  
29 in and out of the class, angry because I wouldn't let her and her friends'  
30 playground issues interrupt my class.  
31

32 There's more. The remaining students were resistant to analyzing the language  
33 in any meaningful way, mirroring the initial reactions of your freshmen in 124.  
34 Allie Gatter was a star, probing, questioning even passages that I hadn't thought  
35 about.  
36

37 The real hot potato came on the second page. Allie stopped us at, "Although  
38 Samuel Callahan owned slaves, he opposed slavery." She said that was a  
39 contradiction. Then there was a total gender breakdown. Chuck said that it was  
40 possible, and two of the other white boys (Carl and Brandon, whom I've had  
41 issues of authority with before) agreed with him. Allie looked absolutely  
42 horrified, and the faces of the African American students who remained in the

43 class fell.

44

45 So I replaced Chuck's words with another historical crisis situation, just asking the  
46 question: "Although Joe Smith aided and abetted the Nazis, he opposed the  
47 Holocaust." Chuck insisted that this was different because while the Holocaust  
48 was evil, slavery was only bad. Carl added that it was mainly economically  
49 motivated. So I asked, "It wasn't deliberate?" "No," they insisted. I then talked  
50 very briefly about what I knew about slavery as an institution and the Holocaust,  
51 and the similarities between both. That's when Brandon nastily interrupted,  
52 "What does this have to do with anything?"

53

54 I then read your research question (which I hadn't written on the board; my  
55 mistake) for Thursday, and expressed my disappointment that people were  
56 unwilling to work through the language. Then the bell rang, people left, I thanked  
57 students who participated as they left, including Chuck, told Brandon sternly that  
58 the conversation had been completely relevant (to which he shrugged).

59

60 My assessment: BAD way to begin a unit like this. Rainfield High School is a  
61 total racial powder keg. Ironically enough, the **\*staff\*** had a huge, huge falling  
62 out on Wednesday afternoon during professional development after I left . . . .  
63 Apparently a critical race theorist came in and told the white teachers that they  
64 were ALL engaging in racist classroom practices. Many of the white teachers  
65 were furious, and apparently the next day (Thursday) many brought up the race  
66 question in one way, shape, or form in their classrooms since it was foremost in  
67 their consciousness. No wonder three of the five white boys in the classroom at  
68 the time reacted with such hostility and anger to the beginning of the introduction.

69

70 If we are encountering this kind of resistance in the classroom **\*before\*** we begin  
71 the unit, Kelly, I think we **\*must\*** have the privilege walk and perhaps a mini-  
72 lesson on Peggy McIntosh's article (one of the veteran teachers said she'd give me  
73 resources) before we begin the book. I refuse to teach another lesson like that,  
74 and to be honest, if you weren't researching me and a friend, I'm sure I would shift  
75 to another book. Put simply, although I have power and authority over my  
76 students as an African-American female teacher, the fact remains that Chuck,  
77 Brandon, and Carl's remarks come from a place of white male privilege. It took  
78 all of lunchtime (with a long discussion with [a colleague] afterward), and a late  
79 lunch with a friend of mine who is a doctoral student in American Culture, to take  
80 the sting out of their remarks. I know that they are children and I am the adult,  
81 but to be honest, I felt as if I had been oppressed and that the pain and suffering of  
82 my own ancestors had been slapped into my face by students I am supposed to be  
83 mentoring and teaching.

84

85 To top it all off, I received a note from Ratsa expressing her disappointment about  
86 the way the class is going. Nice, eh? And her timing was impeccable.  
87 Nevertheless, I could shake it off a bit better. It was just the icing on the cake!

88

89 Most of the African-American teachers at Rainfield (there are extremely few of  
90 any other minority) have expressed their utter disdain for the white teachers and  
91 students. They think that the racism and prejudice is not only institutional, but  
92 individual. I've been able to keep myself above that, but I must admit after my  
93 class, I walked into the teacher's lounge and exploded. "These damn kids and  
94 their privilege! I'm so SICK of this!" And I received muttered nods, and looks of  
95 disdain and bewilderment for my trouble... that's when I went downstairs to the  
96 staff lunch roundtable about race that the counseling department had set up, and  
97 ended up chatting with [a colleague] in her van for 30 min. afterwards.  
98  
99 I've calmed down a bit now. :-) I just wanted to let you know what's going on!  
100 And if it's okay, I'd rather not speak about this or be asked specific questions until  
101 Monday, since it took eight hours. I'm taking the weekend to work on Michigan  
102 stuff, veg out w/ Carrie and others, and get my mind off things.  
103  
104 What a day to miss, eh? And yet, I do wonder if events would have occurred like  
105 that if you (and the camera!) had been in the room. We'll never know, right?  
106  
107 All best, and see you Monday...  
108  
109 Liz (personal communication, March 25, 2006)

Obviously, there is a lot to analyze in this e-mail message about the “powder keg” day. If third period was a “powder keg,” the match was this line from Ruoff’s introduction to *Wynema* read aloud by Allie: “Although he owned many slaves before the Civil War, Samuel opposed slavery” (1997; xiv). Samuel Callahan is the author’s father, a Muscogee Creek Indian, part of what the editor of this edition of *Wynema*, LaVonne Ruoff called “The Muscogee aristocracy” (1995; xv). The Muscogee aristocracy owned considerable property and had slaves who worked the land. Samuel Callahan does not fit the stereotypical view of Indians as oppressed, a complexity students may have found puzzling. S. Alice Callahan lived a life of privilege, relative to other Native American people of her day. She attended a prestigious school and became a teacher. Students may have been startled to read that her father was a slaveholder. According to Liz Turner,

Chuck, an outspoken white male in the class allowed that “it was possible” and garnered the agreement of two other white males in the class. According to Liz Turner, the line had the effect of dividing the class along gender (“there was a total gender breakdown” l. 39) and racial lines (“the faces of the African American students who remained in the class fell” ll. 42-43). Notably, Liz Turner first identifies the conflict as a gender breakdown and only later implies that race may be a factor. It is almost as if Liz Turner, in this e-mail, is adhering to the colorblindness characteristic of the school, which is unlike her. In trying to help students understand the horror of slavery in the U.S., Liz Turner made a comparison to the Holocaust, but this had the effect of increasing tension, especially between Chuck, who asserted that “while the Holocaust was evil, slavery was merely bad,” and Liz Turner, who further explained the similarities between the two. When another white male student, Brandon, “nastily interrupted” (ll. 51-52) asking why this debate was relevant, Liz brought discussion back to the key question of the day and expressed “disappointment” that students were “unwilling to work through the language” (ll. 55-56). Chuck, who was more vested in the debate, told Brandon that “the conversation had been completely relevant” (ll. 57-58). Discussion broke down further, with three of the five white boys reacting with “hostility and anger,” leading Liz Turner to conclude:

Although I have power and authority over my students as an African-American female teacher, the fact remains that the [boys’] remarks come from a place of white male privilege . . . . To be honest, I felt as if I had been oppressed and that the pain and suffering of my own ancestors had been slapped into my face by students I am supposed to be mentoring and teaching. (ll. 75-83)

When asked to clarify what she meant, she said, “Even though I am a member of two historically oppressed groups (African Americans and females), in the space of the

classroom, vested in the role of teacher, I have a semblance of power and authority over everyone in the role of student, even those who are white and male” (personal communication, August 3, 2006). What seems important here is Liz’s conception of her power and authority.

It is because Liz Turner characterized the classroom conflict in this way that I chose to focus on authority as a major theme of my research study and that my data analysis began to focus explicitly on language about authority in the classroom. Following a Grounded Theory approach, I was led to revisit my original research questions and revise them based on my analysis of the data. Although my research questions changed many times over the two years I worked on the project, it was at this particular moment that there was an especially significant change. In my original question, I asked, “Specifically, when we analyze the language in use in a predominantly non-Native classroom where students are encountering Native American/American Indian literatures, how do instances or repeated patterns of language use by both teachers and students suggest moments of confusion, stasis or development in understanding?” I realized that “moments of confusion,” was too mild a term for characterizing what had happened in Liz Turner’s classroom. Instead, I began thinking of asking, “How does a teacher manage her authority during moments of *conflict* during a Native American unit and how does this compare to the larger view of her authority?” My original question was structured so as to invite thought about the connection between confusion and understanding. By changing my question to focus on a stronger term, such as “conflict,” I wondered if I needed to look at understanding differently. When I originally wrote the question, I imagined looking for examples of students understanding the Native literature,

but now I wondered what they might understand about the conflict in their classroom. My original first sub-question was “How does language used in the classroom reflect affordances for student understanding provided by the teacher?” After analyzing the “powder keg” e-mail, I began to wonder if an argument could be made that the way she managed her authority was an affordance in itself? I also wondered what kind of student understanding might arise from such affordances.

### **Student reflection on the “powder keg” day**

Students were asked to write a reflection on the in-class discussion that erupted after students read the line that Callahan owned slaves but did not believe in slavery.<sup>34</sup> Only six students responded, which may be indicative of the tension in the class. Words used to evaluate the discussion ranged from “interesting” and “pretty good” to “should have been longer” to “very strong,” “pointless and boring,” and “solved nothing.” The most common comment was on the hypocrisy of Callahan. Only one student, a white girl who called herself Tiffany for the purposes of this project delved into the issue that divided the class from the teacher:

A few people said that slavery was “just business” and the holocaust was “evil.” I believe both things were evil, but in different ways. The holocaust killed more than half of the Jewish community in a short amount of time in cruel ways. Slavery slowly killed a lot of the African American community over a longer period of time. I’m not saying just because slavery took longer to kill them it wasn’t as bad. Slavery affects African Americans to this day. There are a lot of things slavery ruined. Although contrasting slavery to the Holocaust was a little dramatic. It still was a horrible thing that happened to them.

Another white girl, Allie, wrote, “I really wish I could have continued with my argument a little further. The discussion (in my opinion only) should have been longer and I think

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<sup>34</sup> I was the one that requested the written reflection, not the teacher, Liz Turner. She chose not to read those reflections.

everyone should have contributed. No one really opened up to tell their opinion.” One of the reflections was written by an African American girl who had left the room. Her response shows completely different concerns than those in class: “I didn’t stay for the discussion Friday because I couldn’t concentrate, there were people trying to fight me and my cousins, so we all went to the counselor.” This response illustrates how tensions in the school can override classroom work. Taken together, these comments give some indication—though far from complete--of the breadth of student concerns. It also shows that students had varying understandings of the conflict in the classroom.

### ***The privilege walk: an intervention to raise awareness of white privilege***

Given how devastating the “powder keg” day was for Liz Turner, it was imperative that something be done to deal with the threat to her authority raised by students. In her words, “If we are encountering this kind of resistance in the classroom **\*before\*** we begin the unit, Kelly, I think we **\*must\*** have the privilege walk and perhaps a mini-lesson on Peggy McIntosh's article (one of the veteran teachers said she'd give me resources) before we begin the book.” “Resistance” is a key word here that can be interpreted both as student resistance to Liz’s personal authority as the teacher, but also as student resistance to understanding the material. I suggested we ask someone from the university’s multicultural office to come to the class to lead a privilege walk. The reason I felt someone else should come in is because if Liz were to do it herself, it might further antagonize the white males in the class and increase the antipathy between them and Liz Turner. I didn’t want to lead the privilege walk because, like Liz, I didn’t have training to do so; I also wanted to preserve a positive relationship with students so that I

would have a better chance of interviewing them at the end of the unit. Liz and I talked this over, and she agreed that having a trained, outside facilitator would be best.

Because the privilege walk activity was a last-minute change to the lesson plans, Liz Turner and I did not deliberate on how we would position ourselves during the activity. I chose to participate with the students because I was interested in deconstructing myself as an authority both as a researcher and as someone with some knowledge of NA/AI literatures. As the research project progressed, I had also become interested in exploring my identity as a white female, so I looked on the privilege walk activity as a way to move this process of exploring my identity along, as well as signal to the students my willingness, as a white person, to explore my own privilege. Liz Turner elected to remain sitting at her teacher desk at the front of the room. She had invited one of her colleagues, Ms. Kranston, to observe the class. Ms. Kranston, a white teacher, had become Liz Turner's confidante on the "powder keg" day and was interested both in lending moral support to Liz Turner and in seeing the privilege walk activity as a practitioner to compare it with other anti-racist activities she used in her own classroom.

I discuss the privilege walk in Liz Turner's class in detail in the next chapter, but here I want to focus on Liz Turner's comments to the class at the end of the walk.

399

400           LT: I don't know if you don't want me to say anything because I'm the  
401           teacher. And I just thought it was really interesting thinking about power  
402           in the classroom \_\_\_\_\_. Had I walked with the kids, I would  
403           have been at the very back of the line because of my background. And  
404           because I grew up in \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_. You know, some of the questions  
405           about danger. When I thought about it, I said, "Well, I'm the adult and I  
406           have the education, but [laughs] I would have been behind all of my  
407           students. And so I'm just now thinking about how do I teach or have the  
408           authority of a teacher in that situation? It kind of made me wonder how  
409           my students see me, or there are things from my background and

410               upbringing that inhibits or hinders their education. And you know, I love  
411               all of them, and I want all of them to be ok.

Liz Turner prefaces her comments by deferring to the facilitator, the “you.” She questions whether her role—teacher—allows her to speak. Normally, the teacher is the one person in the classroom who undoubtedly has the authority to speak, but, at this moment Ms. Turner seems unsure if, by having a university facilitator in the classroom, she has ceded that authority. Ms. Turner is highly aware of positioning in the classroom, mentioning power early in her statement. The way she broaches the subject of power is carefully phrased to be value neutral; it was “really interesting” (l. 401) to think about power, a statement she claims by making first person the subject of the sentence. Modifiers also soften the introduction of the topic of power: “I *just* thought” and “it was *really* interesting.”

Although she did not physically participate in the privilege walk—she sat at the teacher desk the entire class period, even while making the above comments—she did reveal where the questions would have positioned her: at the very back of the room, “behind all of my students” (ll.406-407). She asks how she could “have the authority of a teacher in that situation?”(l. 408). Loss of authority seems to be a negative in her eyes; she wonders how the students see her and whether the way they see her “inhibits or hinders their education.” These remarks were made when the whole classroom was listening, and I have no doubt that the students heard her and were constructed as her audience by her eye contact and other nonverbal movements. When analyzing the discourse, one sees how Liz’ words position the students not as the “you” in the first line, but in third person “my students” and as “them.” Rather than answering the question

posed or pausing for others to answer the question, she changes to the topic of her students and how they perceived this activity. In the transcript it looks like this move is a lesser part of her talk, but I remember this part poignantly because she started to cry when she said she wanted her students to “be OK.” Significantly, she repeated this phrase three times. I read the emotion in her voice as fearful that some of them may have been damaged by the activity. She also said four times that she’s sorry that their generation has to deal with racism. Just as she finished her speech, and began to cry, there was a flash of pink tracksuit on the videotape as Tasleem, an African American girl, runs all way across the classroom to give Ms. Turner a hug. There was a mutual expression of caring.

Liz Turner’s ethic of caring is similar to that which undergirds Collins’ work on Black feminist thought as taken up by Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) as part of her theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. The Australian researcher, Osborne, (1996) noted that a common feature in his study was that “culturally relevant teachers are personally warm toward, and respectful of, as well as academically demanding of, all students.” (Osborne, 1996; 296).

However, Liz Turner is doing more than expressing an ethic of caring. By requiring her students to participate in a privilege walk, she is establishing a shared vision of social justice, and a shared vision is necessary for moral authority to be effective. “I just want them all to be OK, that’s all. You know, I’m writing my reflection to you now” (l. 395). She reiterated that thought in a slightly different way after revealing that she would have been at the back in the privilege walk behind her students: “And you know, I love all of them, and I want all of them to be OK” (ll. 410-411). In repeating her hope that her students would be OK, she intensifies her caring for them by stating she loves all

of them. A couple of lines later, she repeats the thought about the welfare of her students again, “I can feel the tension and I want them to be OK. That’s my biggest thing” (ll. 411-412). Her repetition occurs with the difference that she has prioritized the students being OK: “That’s my biggest thing.” Liz Turner continues to express her caring in the next lines and elaborates on that idea as well as on her own positioning:

414 You know, because although I was at the back of the line, I don’t resent...  
415 you know, I love all of my students. Really. No matter what their  
416 background or culture. I know we have gone through a lot since August,  
417 but they have taught me so much. And I absolutely love being here. And  
418 I can’t say there’s a single one of them who I don’t want everything for.  
419 But you know, it does hurt me because before I came to \_\_\_\_\_, I  
420 always thought this was Utopia.

In the excerpt from the video transcript above, Liz repeats her love for her students (l. 415); furthermore, she emphasizes that her love for them is not dependent on their “background or culture” (l. 416). She shows a variation on her caring stance by stating, “I can’t say there’s a single one of them who I don’t want everything for” (l. 418). This line shows her caring for their futures and emphasizes the fact that her caring stance is inclusive of everyone. At the same time she expresses this love and caring, Liz Turner also refers to the potential for her own hurt (l. 419) and resentment (l. 414)—which she claims she does not have—about her position behind all of her students. And note she says, “I was at the back of the line,” even though she did not participate physically in the walk. This word choice suggests that even participating mentally in the walk was so profound that she felt as if she really was at the back of the line.

The choice of “line” is also interesting because students were not actually in a line, they are dispersed throughout the classroom. “Back of the line,” is an expression for being in a subordinate position, a kind of punishment, as in, “Go to the back of the line,”

or “the back of the bus,” the racial law challenged by Rosa Parks. Liz Turner’s word choice here is evocative not of this particular situation in class, but of other instances in her life when she was held back or positioned behind other, more privileged people. Just watching the privilege walk and imagining it was traumatic for Liz Turner, as evidenced by her tears at the end of her comments. Tapping into her own feelings and imagining how her students must be feeling was an act of empathy that demonstrates her deep caring for her students. Her language choices show that she extended that empathy not only to the students who had taken steps backward, but also those who had moved far forward—her white male students. Despite difficulties she had with those students throughout the year, she emphasizes that her love is for *all* of her students.

Student responses to Liz Turner’s expression of caring indicated that it did affect them deeply. It caused them to think about their own ethics. One student, Ashae, after sharing a story about her own lack of caring for a younger sister, shared her conclusions about the ethic of caring: “If you treat each other a certain way, everybody will treat your friends and you the same way you treat yourself and everybody else. So you have to treat other people, everybody, with respect, and other people will treat you with respect” (ll. 454-57). This is an important lesson indeed, one that is crucial for successful culturally relevant pedagogy, not to mention for establishing authority based on cultural legitimacy. Unlike other forms of legitimacy, cultural legitimacy as practiced by Liz Turner in this and previous examples allows her to “empower students by diffusing authority in a manner that turns learning into a two-way process of knowledge construction rather than a one-way banking system of information depositing” (Pace and Hemmings, 2006; 12).

In this way, “Teachers and students educate each other as they work together to achieve social justice” (Pace and Hemmings, 2006; 12).

I did not speak during the privilege walk until after Liz Turner spoke. Since speaking had been very emotional for her, and it appeared to me that she would not be able to say anything else that day, I took on the teacherly role of connecting the privilege walk activity with the unit on *Wynema* when I addressed everyone at the end of the class period:

I think one reason that touches her so much is we do want all of our students to start from the same line and we try to operate as if they do. But the institutional and societal forces are different. That’s what I’d like you to remember as you continue to study *Wynema* because the author would be way back here and she is speaking to some of the structures about education, about how the land is allocated. So those are the pertinent issues for the book. And I just want to thank you for doing this. I think we avoid it sometimes because it’s just a beginning and it opens up so much that’s painful and so it’s easier for people not to open up. . . so I just encourage you in your own lives to continue the work you started today. I want to thank you for facilitating for us.”

### ***Student understanding***

Since the goal of the unit and the efforts of the teacher—through her complex use of authority—were aimed at narrowing the understanding gap that students bring to the study of NA/AI literatures, I want to consider that Lyric continued to question throughout the unit, but my data doesn’t show similar examples of critical perspective from other students. For example, one student wrote in a reflection,

So far in the book I don’t find anything confusing or questionable. I’ve read a few books on Native American culture, so I have a good understanding on their culture. Also, my grandmother is half Native American and she would tell me about the culture and stories. That made me happy. I didn’t really understand, but now I get it.

I’m skeptical about this response. If the student doesn’t find anything questionable about the book, she may not be reading critically enough. I also doubt that she has a “good

understanding of their culture” because if so, she would not describe that culture monolithically—“their culture.” What books did she read? Which tribes did the books focus on? Were the books by Native American authors or non-native? I’d grant she might know a bit more than her peers if she has read some books because the preliminary surveys revealed most students had never read anything by a Native American before, but I doubt her understanding is very deep. She mentions not understanding when her grandmother told her about Native American culture and stories, but “now I get it.” Again, what exactly does she get? Is it reading *Wynema* that has helped her get it out of her grandmother’s stories or vice versa? Unfortunately, these questions remain unanswered because by the time I formulated them in the transcript, school had been dismissed for the summer.

Another student’s (Chuck’s) response shows more sophistication:

The video and the book portray very different sides on the issue of Native American treatment by white people. The video [*500 Nations*] said that Native American children were sent to boarding schools, beaten, and treated like last week’s garbage. In the book, they’re all good little children that help their teacher to teach them better. How did a Native American writer get the issue all-wrong? The video is more accurate.

This student is comparing the representation of Native schooling in the novel to the historical account and finding the historical account in the video more accurate. The question he raises, “How did a Native American writer get the issue all wrong?” is an important one.

Shay also took on a heavy question, why Callahan’s father owned slaves but did not believe in slavery. For Shay, watching the movie was helpful: “After watching the movie, I found that there were many reasons this could have happened. . . The movie

showed that the Native's culture was changed and their land was sold. That's what I think Callahan was trying to get at." Although more specifics would have been useful, there is no doubt that the movie had a powerful impact on all of us. A year later, Liz Turner said she wanted to watch the movie again.

Brandon found the introduction to the novel more effective than the movie in helping him understand the novel. He wrote, " The video was trying to show the culture, beliefs, and feelings that we totally destroyed. The movie almost seemed like it was trying to make you feel bad for them." Brandon's use of first person plural is interesting here—he is identifying himself with the white people who destroyed Native culture and describing the Indians as "them."

### ***Concluding thoughts on authority***

The inclusion of NA/AI literatures in the school curriculum challenges the authority of the Western Canon. Students exposed to NA/AI literatures, often for the first time, sometimes challenge the authority of the teacher to teach these texts, reacting with anger and/or confusion (McLaughlin, 1997; Burlingame, 2005). When Liz Turner encountered resistance from her white male students on the first day that the class read *Wynema*, she defined the conflict in terms of power and authority. Given that teacher authority (as opposed to power) is only a probability that rests on rational, traditional, and or charismatic legitimacy (Weber, 1947) or professional expertise (Pace, 2003), and that, furthermore, authority is socially constructed (Metz, 1978) it is not surprising that there is ambiguity in how it is enacted. Race (Delpit, 1988) and gender (Noblit, 1993) further influence how authority is used, with women and minorities found to reference moral

authority. An analysis of Liz Turner's authority reveals it to be contextual, positional, and dynamic, with her using a variety of forms of legitimacy.

Within this complex and shifting picture of Liz Turner's authority, I found that an additional form of legitimacy on which she based her authority was cultural legitimacy, which is connected to certain characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy; specifically, a propensity to acknowledge and communicate in the different cultural registers of her students, a tactic of compensating for a lack of direct experience with NA/AI literatures with her experience with the literatures of other people of color, and a willingness to share authority with students. In helping students like Lyric bridge their understanding gap about NA/AI literatures, she taps into her professional expertise to establish authority, while simultaneously modeling a critical consciousness for her students, for, as she states, "knowledge without the tools of critical analysis is a dangerous thing." In so doing, Liz Turner works to create a shared understanding of the world between herself and her students, one in which she encourages *appropriate* challenges to authority—a fine balancing act indeed.

In terms of the overall project of this dissertation, this chapter has relied most heavily on theories from the field of education, theories about teacher authority. The choice to focus on authority, while not driven by the original research questions, was influenced by an analysis of the language in use by the teacher, which gave emphasis to power and authority. The logic of exploring authority comes not only from a Grounded Theory approach to my methodology, but is also consonant with the review of literature, which reveals a problematic and complex representation of the teaching of NA/AI texts. The potential for challenges to authority—both the authority of the teacher and of the

authors—is hampered by a lack of pedagogical infrastructure that impedes teacher access to the necessary cultural background knowledge to contextualize NA/AI literatures. This chapter has given some insight into how one particular teacher and her students struggled with an “understanding gap” about NA/AI literatures. The exploration of authority in this chapter has highlighted how it is important to consider the race and culture of both teacher and students, as well as that of the author and subjects in the book under study. In fact, in Liz Turner’s classroom at Rainfield High School, the study of a novel by and about Muscogee Creek Indians could not proceed until the Liz Turner and her students dealt with the black-white tensions in their own classroom that erupted on the “powder keg” day. Liz Turner avoided basing her authority on professional legitimacy in favor of cultural legitimacy, emphasizing her cultural knowledge as an African American woman as an asset for African American students like Lyric in bridging the understanding gap. In the following chapter, I move from analytical approaches typical of the field of education to analytical approaches that originate in the discipline of English to show how a layering of spatial analysis on top of the discourse analysis of this chapter gives us a deeper view of the issues in this classroom.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Analysis of Spatial and Discursive Moves in Callahan's *Wynema* and Liz Turner's Ninth Grade Classroom**

This chapter deals with issues of space that arose in Liz Turner's ninth grade classroom during the second semester. Although my original research questions did not include spatial elements, after noticing changes in where students were sitting and how classroom space was being used before, during and after the Native American unit on *Wynema*, I began closer scrutiny of classroom space, focusing on the day the class participated in a "privilege walk," because on this day space was used in a radical way to visually represent the racial, gender, sexual, and socioeconomic differences among the students in the class. Furthermore, there are several indicators that the privilege walk activity was transformative for those involved in it. To illustrate, students felt that the activity made visible the racial differences in the classroom, the teacher repeatedly referred to the activity as "healing," and the students who typically spoke less in the class—five African American girls—spoke up during the privilege walk about their difficult life experiences and continued to increase their verbal participation in class from that day forward. Indicators such as these led me to focus on the privilege walk in my data and radiate my analysis both backward and forward from that day, paying attention to space and discourse, especially in relation to race and culture. Doing so helped me to see patterns that had heretofore been hidden, and to strengthen my interpretive skills, I turned to researchers such as Martinec (2001) and Foucault (1995) who have theorized human movement and use of space. I considered some of the same data—field notes,

videotapes, and written student reflections—in different ways. For example, I focused more on a visual analysis of the videotapes and looked for moments of convergence and divergence between the visual analysis and discourse analysis.

### ***Theorization of space***

In the usual arrangement of Liz Turner's classroom, student movements are constrained by desks, and because students are expected to remain seated at their desks most of the time, the result is a distribution of bodies that is generally fixed and falls into engagement categories of close personal, close social, and far social space, depending on the angle of the body (Martinec, 2001). The presenting modality of the students in their desks, generally speaking, is assuredness, indicated by muscle relaxation and varying degrees of willingness or unwillingness to move, depending on whether they angle their bodies forward or backward. Occupying the space of a classroom has been what these students have been doing for much of the waking hours of their lives thus far, and there is an established routine to what their bodies generally do in a classroom.

Spatial arrangements can have an effect on a person's actions. Foucault (1995) primarily studied the spatial arrangements of prisons and hospitals, but his theorization of discipline, especially the section on docile bodies, is relevant to the partitioning of space among the students in classrooms in general and this classroom in particular. "Discipline proceeds from the distribution of individuals in space" (Foucault, 1995; 144).<sup>35</sup> Several techniques are used to achieve this, including enclosure. Foucault cites secondary schools as one example among many of enclosure. Partitioning is another technique. Separating

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<sup>35</sup> I have chosen to rely heavily on Foucault's theory here because: 1) much of the other theorists in English reference Foucault, and 2) he is a spatial theorist in the field of English studies who does consider the particular spatial qualities of schools.

students into classes and assigning each class an individual room is an example of partitioning. Such partitioning, I assert, not only partitions off “classes,” as in “groups of students of the same grade who occupy a room,” but also social and economic *classes*. Evidence of this can be found in the trend for a greater proportion of privileged students to be enrolled in more challenging classes, such as AP (Advanced Placement) classes. The College Board, which administers the AP exam, reports that in U.S. schools African American and Native American students remain significantly underrepresented in AP classes. Nationwide, African American students make up 14 percent of the student population, but only 7.4 percent of AP exam takers, and Native Americans make up 1.1 percent of the student population, but only 0.6 percent of the AP examinee population (College Board, 2008).

Another disciplining technique, according to Foucault, is the creation of functional sites, which involves the labeling of sites. Labeling classes “Advanced,” “Regular,” and “Remedial,” for example, creates functional sites. Liz Turner’s ninth grade class was labeled “Regular,” and the other ninth grade classes were labeled “Intensive,” meaning honors or college preparatory. Assigning students a desk via a seating chart is also an example of creating a functional site. Students at Rainfield High School are partitioned into classrooms, and within the classroom, additional partitioning takes place. Liz Turner does not assign students a desk using a seating chart, which could be described as creating functional sites within the classroom, but a seating pattern can be discerned, showing students self-disciplining by how they choose to position themselves in the space of the classroom. For example, the five African American girls positioning themselves together and at the back of the classroom spatially echoes their rank at the

bottom of the gradebook ranking. That is, they had the some of the lowest grades in Liz Turner's class.

Rank is another disciplining technique, which Foucault explains thus:

In the eighteenth century, 'rank' begins to define the great form of distribution of individuals in the educational order: rows or ranks of pupils in the class, corridors, courtyards; rank attributed to each pupil at the end of each task and each examination; the rank he/ obtains from week to week, month to month, year to year; an alignment of age groups, one after another; a succession of subjects taught and questions treated, according to an order of increasing difficulty. (Foucault, 1995; 146-147)

My own experiences in school were in a time and place when rank was shielded from student view, so I remember being quite surprised when, on a student teacher exchange trip to Japan in 1997, middle school students came up to me and told me their rank in their class, as in "I am 14<sup>th</sup> in my class." According to Foucault, the assigning of rank, or "individual spaces," allowed for "the supervision of each individual and the simultaneous work of all, . . . and it [rank] organized a new economy of the time of apprenticeship. It made the educational space function like a learning machine, but also as a machine for supervising, hierarchizing, rewarding" (Foucault, 1995; 147). Students in Liz Turner's classroom are ranked in her gradebook, but this ranking is not usually made public. An exception is when she had Tay-Tay come to the front of the room and sit on the stool she usually sat on to share his strategies for maintaining his rank of "A" student with the rest of the class.

In addition to the art of distributions described above, Foucault also theorized how the control of activity has a disciplining effect. A principal method of controlling activity is the timetable, a way of compartmentalizing time so that each activity has its own space, corresponding to a specific time, on the timetable. Students at Rainfield High

were kept to a strict timetable for their classes. The disciplining of the bodies of these students in space at Rainfield High School is fairly predictable and typical of students in the larger American public school system. As such, the disciplining power of this distribution of bodies in space is highly restrictive, functioning as it does as part of an ideological state apparatus (Althusser, 1971) that contributes to social reproduction. That is, by compartmentalizing students of differing “abilities” into different classes and timetables, the possibility for schools to function as sites of cultural and social reproduction increases. We can observe students at Rainfield High self-positioning themselves within the classroom in ways that are consistent with the larger forces in society (e.g., segregating themselves by race). The fact that there is no visible external force enforcing this positioning is indicative of the school functioning as an Ideological State Apparatus. It is the invisible power of such structures that a spatial analysis can illuminate.

### ***Relevance of Native American study to spatial analysis***

The fact that my analysis of space in the classroom takes place during a Native American unit, as opposed to some other subject of study, is significant not only because of the particular type of multicultural literature under study, but also because of the particular novel read. In this section, I will delve into the spatial elements of the novel. Granted, students were not themselves doing this kind of spatial analysis of the novel, but both the teacher and I were thinking about these elements and trying to convey some of them to the students. During the unit, the students studied *Wynema* (1891) the first novel by a woman of NA/AI descent, a novel that has everything to do with space. Callahan (Muscoogie Creek) deals with a major re-structuring of the way NA/AI peoples

occupied land in the United States—The Dawes Act—and the author presents reactions to this law. Besides reading and discussing this issue, students were also actively encouraged to compare and contrast the disciplining of their own schooling, vis-à-vis a timetable, with the assimilationist practices in NA/AI boarding schools. Whether teacher initiated—as in the timetable activity—or student initiated—as some of the written reflections later in this chapter will show—space, and especially Native American use of land, was a topic of classroom discussion during the unit.

Indian history is one of violent spatial dislocations. Prior to allotment, Federal Indian policy consisted of removal, treaties, reservations, and even war. According to the education staff at the U.S. Archives website, The Dawes Act functioned thus:

[T]he law allowed for the president to break up reservation land, which was held in common by the members of a tribe, into small allotments to be parceled out to individuals. Thus, Native Americans registering on a tribal “roll” were granted allotments of reservation land. Each head of family would receive one-quarter of a section (120 acres); each single person over 18 or orphan child under 18 would receive one-eighth of a section (60 acres); and other single persons under 18 would receive one-sixteenth of a section (30 acres). In order to receive the allotted land, members were to enroll with the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Once enrolled, the individual’s name went on the “Dawes rolls.” This process assisted the BIA and the secretary of the interior in determining the eligibility of individual members for land distribution. (Education Staff, 2005)

The distribution of Native Americans/American Indians onto lots is a massive disciplining movement by the U.S. government, and the placing of names on the “Dawes Rolls” serves as a preliminary step to disciplining them and redistributing them in space, much like the labeling of hospital beds with patient names was an initial step in disciplining that space, according to Foucault (1995; 144).

The goal of the disciplining of Native Americans/American Indians was assimilation. Senier points out the connections between allotment and assimilation: “The

legislation purported to *give* Indians something—fee patents, citizenship, and attendant civil rights—and yet it clearly aimed to *make* Indians something—agrarian, Christian, possessive individuals, homogenized ‘American’ subjects” (Senier, 2000; 421). Along with Indian schools, the assimilation was the aim of the Dawes Act (Hoxie, 2001). The U.S. Archives education staff states: “Very sincere individuals reasoned that if a person adopted white clothing and ways, and was responsible for his own farm, he would gradually drop his Indianness and be assimilated into the population” (2005). Furthermore, allotment created functional sites in the form of blood quantum,<sup>36</sup> a structure that continues to be problematic today (Grande, 2004).

In the novel *Wynema*, we see the assimilationist view in the words of the Native character after whom the novel is named. Wynema says to her former teacher, a white woman named Genevieve: “I don’t see how dividing our lands can materially damage us” (50). Ironically, Wynema, the Muscogee Creek main character, expresses one of the main white arguments in favor of allotment:

There are so many idle, shiftless Indians, who do nothing but hunt and fish; then there are others who are industrious and enterprising; so long as our land remains whole, in common, these lazy Indians will never make a move toward cultivating it; and the industrious Indians and ‘squaw men’ will inclose as much as they can for their own use. Thus the land will be unequally divided, the lazy Indians getting nothing because they will not exert themselves to do so; while, if the land were allotted, do you not think that these idle Indians, knowing the land to be their own, would have pride enough to cultivate their land and build up their homes? (Callahan, 1891; 51)

Wynema’s views are surprising in that they are in contradiction to the message about the superiority of open space expressed earlier by Keithly, the priest who hired Genevieve to

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<sup>36</sup> Blood quantum is a way of counting the fraction of Indian blood an individual has. It is problematic because it is used to regulate Indian identity and even hasten the process of colonization (Lawrence, B. (2003) *Hypatia*, 18( 2), pp. 3-31). To truly represent the complexity of blood quantum issues, a book-length exploration would be necessary.

teach at the school in Wynema's home village. It is as if Callahan does not trust that her pro-Indian rights message can be heard if delivered by an Indian. Furthermore, Wynema's view is in direct contradiction to traditional Muscogee use of land: "The early Creek Indians were horticulturalists and hunter-gatherers. Horticultural products such as maize and beans were planted in large communal fields that were usually adjacent to the town and river. Individual families also gardened in small family plots near the household compound" (Foster, 2004; 65). The Muscogee don't need allotment to accomplish the goals Wynema lists.

Instead, it is Genevieve who counters Wynema's argument with two points—if Indian lands were allotted, Indian territory would become a state and, therefore, a subject of the United States government, and if Indians, without the means of supporting themselves, were given land, they would likely sell it and end up landless and homeless. In fact, something very similar, in reality, did come to pass:

The purpose of the Dawes Act and the subsequent acts that extended its initial provisions was purportedly to protect Indian property rights, particularly during the land rushes of the 1890s, but in many instances the results were vastly different. The land allotted to the Indians included desert or near-desert lands unsuitable for farming. In addition, the techniques of self-sufficient farming were much different from their tribal way of life.<sup>37</sup> Many Indians did not want to take up agriculture, and those who did want to farm could not afford the tools, animals, seed, and other supplies necessary to get started. There were also problems with inheritance. Often young children inherited allotments that they could not farm because they had been sent away to boarding schools. Multiple heirs also caused a problem; when several people inherited an allotment, the size of the holdings became too small for efficient farming. (Education Staff, 2005)

Michael R. McLaughlin, a librarian who created an annotated bibliography of documents related to the Dawes Act, argues that the real reasons for the Dawes Act were to "obtain

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<sup>37</sup> This statement should be read critically. There is a wealth of archeological evidence (Kehoe) that many North American tribes practiced self-sufficient farming as part of their tribal way of life.

land for white settlement, to reduce the costs of treaty obligations to tribes, and to reconcile the sentiment of influential social reformers who wanted native peoples to be included in American society” (M. McLaughlin, 1996; 64). He adds that, “There is no record of native peoples participating in the formulation of the act” (64). The US government was wildly successful in its first aim: Indian land holdings were reduced from 147,000,000 acres in 1887 to 55,000,000 in 1934 (65).

Allotment is also significant because with it comes a way of representing Native Americans in space using a map, and one of the features of a map is a scale marker so that one can determine the distance between points. The way Wynema’s tribe operates prior to allotment is not measurable in this way. Genevieve describes the place of the busk<sup>38</sup> in these terms: “At sundown they started for the camping-ground, which was some miles distant—how many could not be exactly told/ for an Indian never measures distance” (Callahan, 1891; 14-15). Obviously, this is a generalization as well as a stereotype. The Indians who created the earthworks in Newark, Ohio, for example, must have had quite a sophisticated way of measuring distance in order to align their mounds with moonrise. So, while I wish to question the idea that mapmakers of this period were working with a blank space, they nonetheless changed the space. According to deCerteau, a map “colonizes space; it eliminates little by little the pictorial figurations of the practices that produce it” (deCerteau, 1984; 121). Allotment, then, with its requisite maps, not only functions as a tool of assimilation, it also colonizes space.

Senier celebrates *Wynema* for providing a “rare and radical critique of allotment” (2000; 423), but argues that it fails to supply a tribal discourse as an alternative to

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<sup>38</sup> A Muscogee Creek green corn ceremony celebrating the first fruits of the season.

assimilation, a critique echoed by Craig Womack (1999; 423). Although I agree that Callahan does not provide an alternative to assimilation, there are two moves she makes that are alternative, both relating to space: the space of Wynema's school and the narrative space of the novel.

The alternative space of the school is significant because schooling is such a powerful tool of assimilation. Wynema, as a very young girl, on her first visit to a mission school sixteen miles from her village of teepees is reluctant to return home. She exhorts her father to let her stay at the school and learn: "let me stay here and listen always; I want to know all this that the pupils are talking about" (3). Wynema's desire to be educated sets her apart, for the narrator has informed the reader: ". . . the Indians long left to follow after pleasure are loth to quit her shrine for the nobler one of Education. It was hard to impress upon them, young or old, the necessity of becoming educated" (2).<sup>39</sup> Wynema's father, Choe Harjo, in refusing her request, does not take issue with education per se, but with Wynema leaving her home in order to be educated. He proposes an alternative: "we can build you a school at home, and you may stay there and listen" (3). Thus begins the theme of education in the novel, and also the first operationalization of the interplay between space and place in the novel.

Wynema's village is a space; the mission school is a place. In "Spatial Stories," deCerteau defines place (*lieu*) as, "The order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in coexistence" and space (*espace*) as what "exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of

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<sup>39</sup> This is one of many examples of stereotyping in the novel. Callahan may have written this way in order to draw in her white readers.

movements deployed within it” (1984; 117). The mission school where Wynema wants to be educated is a place. That mission school is assigned a missionary (Gerald Keithly) and probably appears on a map back at Keithly’s home church. The mission school is located a certain number of miles from the next village (sixteen) and from other missions. By contrast, Wynema’s village is a space, an intersection of mobile elements, especially time variables. The fictional busk in the novel, for example, does not occur at a particular place—the people gather at an unmapped outdoor space—but at a particular time—when the first corn comes in. The school Wynema envisions in the “space” of her village comes into being not with a physical foundation being laid in a particular place, but through her imagination:

Every day she thought with delight of the school her father would build, and every day planned it all for the benefit of her little friends and playmates, who had become anxious also, from hearing Wynema’s description of school life, to enter “learning’s hall.” When Gerald Keithly finally came, he found a small school organized under Wynema, *waiting for a house and teacher*. (italics added, 3)

So, although the physical school does not yet exist as a place, it is “waiting for a house and teacher,” it can be “found” by the white missionary (and by Wynema and her friends). The mobile elements of Wynema’s desire, her father’s assent, and the willingness of her friends have created the space of a school prior to it actually being recognized as a place. Wynema’s planning, facilitated by her father’s wish to keep the family unit intact and Keithly’s enchantment with her strong desire to learn, have resulted in what can be read as quite a subversive act. Locating the school in a village works against a powerful tool of assimilation: separating a generation of Indian children from their parents and punishing them for speaking their Native languages.

To understand the significance of Wynema and her father negotiating to have a school in their home village, it is useful to consider the alternative: the act of going away from home to attend school. A contrast can be found in Zitkala-Sa's nonfiction account in *American Indian Stories* of leaving her home for boarding school, which demonstrates the disciplining practices that take place in this environment. Students at Rainfield High School read an excerpt from this text about Zitkala-Sa's first day at boarding school, "A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears" (Zitkala-Sa, 2003; 89). The sound of the bell is a signal of how time will be compartmentalized for the students at the school and the sound itself, combined with other sounds, is restrictive: "The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling its lost freedom, all was useless" (89). Zitkala-Sa's account also speaks to the disciplining of bodies through the repetition of bells:

We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. . . . A small bell was tapped and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing the act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. (90)

Besides sound, Zitkala-Sa and the other boarding school students are also disciplined by surveillance. On this first day, Zitkala-Sa learns that she is not to watch the whites, but they will be watching her:

I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more. (89-90)

The strictly timed movements of the students with each part of the movement signaled by a bell is representative of the highly compartmentalized schedules at Indian boarding schools, and, like allotment, a powerful tool of disciplining Indians. Zitkala-Sa's experiences are by no means unique. In the U.S. archives one can find many examples of such boarding school schedules. This one, from the Oglala Sioux Boarding School (the other tribe besides the Muskogee depicted in the novel is the Sioux), is representative of the kinds of schedules to which Native American students had to adhere:

Daily Program, Monday a.m.

Rising Bell and Reveille	6:00	
First Call	6:50	
Assembly	6:55	
Breakfast	7:00	
Work Call	7:45	
Industrial Details Report	7:45	
Industrial Session	7:45-9:15	
School Call	First 8:15	Second 8:20
Academic Session	8:30-11:40	
Recall	11:45	
Dinner	11:55	
School Call	First 12:45	Second 12:50
Academic Session	12:50-4:00	
Industrial Detail Report	3:00	
Athletic Teams practice	4:00-5:00	
Recall	5:00	
Retreat	5:20	
Supper	5:30	
Religious instruction by missionaries	6:15-7:15	
Call to quarters	8:45	
Tattoo	8:50	
Taps and Lights out	9:00	

This schedule shows the disciplining effects of schooling to be akin to the distribution of bodies in eighteenth century European factories, prisons, and hospitals that Foucault describes in *Discipline and Punish*. Besides allotment, the passage of the Dawes Act also signaled a shift in Native American education: from missionary schools and manual day labor schools to boarding schools (Walker, 1997; Hoxie, 2001).

Although Foucault was writing mainly about the change in prisons in the nineteenth century, he does cite boarding schools as one example of this technique for disciplining the body (141). Two other techniques Foucault outlines that are relevant to the change in American Indian Education are the “need to distribute and partition off space in a rigorous manner” and the control of activity through a timetable (149). The disciplining effect of such a schedule was meant to speed along the process of assimilation, but it seems to have also prepared students for life in a factory or prison. The hyper-scheduling of boarding schools according to bells is the antithesis of a life scheduled by, for example, the ripening of green corn, which served—in *Wynema*—as the signal to hold the busk. Wynema’s father’s prescience in resisting sending Wynema away to school saves her from this kind of disciplining process. Wynema’s school is a subversive space that allows her to acquire English and read great literature and even to fit in seamlessly with life in Genevieve’s bourgeois home, yet not make her a stranger to her own village and culture upon returning home from boarding school, as was Zitkala-Sa’s experience (and many other Native American children’s).

Wynema’s predicament is one faced by many children of color in school today. Lisa Delpit has written about the struggle to acquire the discourse of power while still

remaining conversant in one's home discourse. That Callahan wishes to promote this alternative model of schooling is evident when we learn near the end of the novel that the school has grown to include over two hundred students and Wynema is asking for the building to be expanded. Native American schooling, following this model, can be successful, an important message when one considers that Callahan herself was a teacher at a mission school.

In addition to representing views of Indian schooling, Callahan is addressing a dual audience in narrative space as well: whites and American Indians. However, the careful attention to making the story appealing to her white audience is not maintained throughout the novel. Siobhan Senier points out the movement from “white characters’ explications of indigenous culture . . . to Indians speaking for themselves” (2000; 432). The first voice we hear is Wynema’s, which makes sense as she acquires English in the first part of the novel and so has less need for mediation by the white characters, but in the end, when the Battle of Wounded Knee is told, there are voices of other characters as well. “Wildfire,” the chief leading the resistance, explains how U.S. land policy has affected his people:

We were once a large and powerful nation, ruling over a vast portion of this country of yours. By the white man’s cruelty, we have been driven farther and farther away until we now occupy this Government reservation, in a climate so cold and exposed to such hardships that our numbers have diminished until we are but a handful—a mere speck of what we were. In the old days we were free; we hunted and fished as we pleased, while our squaws tilled the soil.<sup>40</sup> Now we are driven/ to a small spot, chosen by the pale-faces, where we are watched over and controlled by agents who can starve us to death at their will. (80-81)

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<sup>40</sup> Note Callahan’s subversive move here—Wildfire’s comment works against previous stereotypical statements in the novel about Indians only seeking after pleasure rather than working the land.

Wildfire's objection to being "watched over" on a reservation is similar to Zitkala-Sa's discomfiture at being watched in the boarding school. Increased surveillance is characteristic of both of these spaces. Surveillance is a disciplining technique (Foucault, 1995), and one which Wildfire is well aware of as he uses the image of a caged bird to justify going into a battle that means certain death:

What is life to a caged bird, threatened with death on all sides? The cat springs to catch it and hangs to the cage looking with greedy eyes at the victim. Strange, free birds gather round its prison and peck at its eyes, taunting it with its captivity until it beats its wings against the cage and longs for freedom, yea even the freedom of *death* (81).

Wildfire's point is that it is not only the confinement, but also being watched while in confinement, that is unbearable. Carl Peterson's efforts to convince the warriors to go back to the reservation are in vain, and when he returns from the Sioux battlefield to tell the story of the massacre, it is clear that Callahan has finished with white mediation of Indian issues. Peterson brings along an elder, Chikena, the only survivor of the massacre, and Wynema, who happens to know the Sioux language, translates the tragic story. Chikena makes clear that the battle is about land when she starts her story thus: "There was a time when my people had plenty of land . . . but after a while the pale-faces came along, and by partly buying, partly seizing our lands by force, drove us very far away from our fertile country, until the Government placed us on a reservation in the Northwest" (95). Chikena also ends the story on the topic of land, asking her audience to remember "that for every acre of the land the United States government holds today, which it acquired from the Indians of any tribe, from the landing of Columbus, it has not paid five cents on average" (98).

Chikena's statement about land is clear and direct. It's possible the Rainfield High students reading these words thought about land and space differently afterwards.<sup>41</sup> They may have also thought about their own space in the classroom. Classrooms are a disciplining space: students are enclosed in classrooms and partitioned off from each other; labeling of classrooms according to the abilities of students within them creates functional sites; students are ranked within classrooms; activity is controlled through the compartmentalization of time in the school day; and students (and teachers) are under surveillance at all times. After reading *Wynema*, students might look at their own situation with a new perspective. Students may wonder why such disciplining techniques are a ubiquitous quality of the schools they have attended. In the next section, I will show how Liz Turner encouraged students to think about space in the novel, in the classroom, and in this country, and how students responded to her efforts.

### ***Students consider their own place in schools***

Just as the privilege walk encouraged students to consider their place in society in terms of privilege, Liz Turner asked students to consider their place in schools and compare it to that of Native American students in boarding schools. After students gave their presentations on background information, Liz Turner assigned the first four chapters of *Wynema* and then talked about schooling. She passed out a sample timetable for a Native American boarding school that I had given her (see previous section) then, she assigned students to write their own timetables and reflect on them: "The second part of this is I want you to compare and contrast representations of schooling in *Wynema* with

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<sup>41</sup> Questions about land and space were not asked on the student surveys because the focus on space did not arise until later in the data analysis. So, my suppositions here are purely hypothetical.

your own experiences of schooling. . . . I want you to create your own timetable and compare it.”

This metacognitive task had the potential for students to see the restrictions of the boarding school schedule as similar to the disciplining forces of their own schools, but only three similarities were noted: we both have school, we both have a bed time, and we both have meals at about the same time. This tendency, to *not* see the disciplinary effects of their own school system, is worth noting because it speaks to the invisibility of such structures, a characteristic of ISAs. The use of classroom space is notably invisible to these students. Students focused much more on the differences, and the most common difference noted was that boarding school students spend more time in religious instruction (four responses). The most common pattern in the differences noted had to do with freedom. Rainfield students felt that they had more freedom and choice than American Indian boarding school students had:

My schedule is more relaxed.  
I have choices in many different things like when, where, and what I have for my meals and I don't have a designated time to get up and go to sleep.  
They had little privacy and free time. My days are more free and I don't know exactly what I am doing each and every day.  
I always do different things at different times of the day. It seems like they have a perfect schedule for every little thing and it's the same for every day.  
Their schedule is so forceful and you have almost no freedom.  
They don't get two and a half hours of nothing like I do.

Other student responses focused on a variety of differences in details:

They go to bed earlier.  
I get up earlier.  
I watch TV.  
I don't have work call.  
There wasn't any time wasted on getting to school because the students were already there.

Students also wrote about the cultural differences between themselves and American Indian boarding school students: “Wynema and I have quite different lives. This is because she has been raised in a different environment than I and she has been surrounded with different cultural practices than I have.” Students also expressed feelings of guilt:

I feel many different feelings when looking at this schedule for Wynema.<sup>42</sup> I feel like they do way more things than I do in a day. They work really hard in just one day. I feel bad for them. I feel like I don’t work enough after seeing this schedule. I feel like I can do a lot more to help out around my house and school. But then again, I don’t really want to work hard. You can say I’m last but I work hard, but not as much as the kids in Wynema.

This response stands out from the others because it is the one of the few examples I have of “white guilt,” although the student, Tay-Tay is actually half white and half African American. Another student wrote, “People who think Rainfield is bad should take a look at the schedule of these kids in boarding school. This is horrible! This definitely makes me feel more fortunate.” Rainfield High School students *are* more fortunate, but these responses show hesitation in applying the same level of analysis to their own classrooms. The privilege walk helped make visible some of the invisible spatial practices disciplining the students in this classroom, especially partitioning related to race and gender. The facilitator helped students to look more critically at their own classroom during the privilege walk. But before I discuss the walk, I need to describe the classroom space prior to the privilege walk.

### ***Classroom space prior to the Native American unit***

Given the uniformity of the rows of desks, and the large window in the door that

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<sup>42</sup> This is a student error—students were actually looking at Zitkala-Sa’s schedule, not Wynema’s.

afforded a clear view (surveillance) of the classroom to passersby, Liz Turner's classroom could be said to have what Foucault (1995) calls a disciplining effect. I noted where students were sitting. Although Liz Turner did not require students to sit in assigned seats, the students generally sat in the same seats each day (see chart below). Their lack of mobility in the space of the classroom suggests a kind of self-disciplining they have internalized over time. In my own experience as a high school teacher, I found the same phenomenon—students, once they have chosen a space in the classroom, rarely change.

The rigidity of the Rainfield High students' self-positioning was made apparent to me on one of the first few days I was in the classroom. I came into the class early and sat in the desk labeled "Tasleem" below. The other African American girls—Shay, Ashae, Gabriella and Keanna—sat around me. I noticed Tasleem standing and hovering near me. Her body language prompted me to ask, "Is this your seat?" She nodded, and I asked if she would like me to move. She gave an unclear nonverbal response, so I moved and she immediately sat in that desk and began talking with her seatmates. This group of five African American girls usually sat together at the back of the room, where I show them sitting in the chart below, or in the back corner, a seat or two to the right. These students frequently arrived late and talked with each other instead of responding to the lesson underway. The way in which these girls occupy space in the classroom is reminiscent of Beverly Tatum's observations in the book *Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?* (1997). The positioning of the students made the classroom, during this phase, appear segregated.

Figure 4.1. Seating in Liz Turner’s classroom at Rainfield High prior to privilege walk

	Teacher’s desk						
Chuck ♂	Brandon ♂						
Zeb ♂							Lyric ♂
Tay-Tay ♂							
Kyla ♀	Ratsa ♀	Greg ♂				Arthur ♂	Tiffany ♀
Jessica ♀	Allie ♀	John ♂		Tasleem ♂	Shay ♂	Joe ♂	Carl ♂
	Jeff ♂		researcher	Ashae ♂	Keanna ♀	Gabriella ♀	

\*Names are pseudonyms chosen by the students.



Empty desk



African American student



white student



♂ = male student



♀ = female student

## ***Disruption of spatial arrangement on the first day of the Wynema unit***

Disruption of the spatial arrangement of the class started before the privilege walk. The seating arrangement of the class was disrupted on the first day of the unit, when Liz Turner brought the students to the library computer lab to research background topics prior to reading *Wynema*. (The lesson plan for the first day of the unit can be found in Appendix 13.) Liz Turner did not create a written revision of the lesson plan, but some notable changes that she made verbally were to skip the mini-lecture on QARs (Question-Answer Relationships), to have students go directly to the library to do research, and to assign the introduction to *Wynema* for homework. Students chose from the following topics (also listed in Appendix 14): Muscogee/Creek Indian tribe, Sioux Indian tribe, S. Alice Callahan, allotment/The Dawes Act, publishing history and reception of *Wynema*, 19<sup>th</sup> Century writing, Wounded Knee, general historical background, and Native American education. I went to the school library earlier in the week to select books relevant to these topics, and the librarians pulled the books from the shelves and put them on a cart in the computer lab for the students.

If the spatial norm in the classroom is for students to sit in rows of desks, then the first day of the unit, when students went to the library to do research on a topic related to background information on *Wynema*, breaks students out of the norm. Rather than being confined to a particular desk, or at least the general space of the classroom to which they were habituated, students moved freely around the library computer lab, from the rack of books on Native Americans selected by me and pulled from the shelves by the librarian, to the computers.

Students are also free to pick their own partners for the research groups, and they have generally chosen to work with students who sit near them. So, when the groups are sitting at computers to work on their research and create their handouts, there is a correlation between the way students are occupying the usual classroom space and the way they are occupying space in the lab in that they are replicating some aspects of proximity. Nevertheless, the video of this day shows a lot of movement, movement that is generally not a usual part of the way students have been using their classroom space. Furthermore, in the computer lab, Liz Turner has a lavalier microphone attached to her, so the audio portion of the video focuses on her interactions with students. While the video is fixed—the camera being mounted on a tripod at one end of the room—the audio moves with the teacher. The movement of the teacher deconstructs the notion that the “front” of the room is where the teacher is. The video/audio arrangement is useful in showing how the teacher positions students with her discourse and what the students’ spatial movements are at the same time.

The dominant pattern in the way the teacher discursively positions the students as she helps them with their assignment is that of positioning them as researchers. So, along with more movement and occupying a different space, the students are also asked to occupy a different position—to present themselves as the “expert” on their background topic, rather than the receiver of information from an authority (the teacher). The following table tracks the number and type of references to such positioning throughout the class period.

Figure 4.2. References to positioning

# of reference	teacher discourse on research
1.	“You’re going to decide, as a researcher, what is most important for your audience to know”
2.	“You’re the expert on this. I know nothing about that period.”
3.	“For research, you need to make sure that you’re not covering the whole broad topic . . . Generate that question. Answer that question. That’s research. It’s not telling everything about a topic. OK?”
4.	“So <i>you</i> decide whether or not we need to know 15 facts about this or 10 facts. Why did you pick these facts?”
5.	“. . . what’s your research questions that you’re asking?”
6.	“Have you guys generated your research question yet? Have you decided what particular things about the topic you’re going to talk about, about the Dawes Act? So what’s your question going to be here?”
7.	“Hi guys. I just have one really quick question. What question did you generate about your topic; about the Trail of Tears? What is the specific question you’re answering?”
8.	“Oh, well first of all, one of the things you need to do before you look for anything is once you choose your topic to ask a specific question about the topic.”
9.	“What is the specific question you want to know about Native American education?”
10.	“Research can be very boring, but it can also be like sleuthing or detective work”

While it is not surprising to find a pattern of references to research in a transcript of a class focused on doing research, what is notable about these references is the way the teacher takes many opportunities to position the students as experts on their topics. In the first reference, she tells them they are the decision-makers, and in the second, she explicitly says, “You’re the expert on this.” Furthermore, the teacher minimizes her own authority by stating, “I know nothing about that period.” In the fourth reference, she again emphasizes that the students are in charge of their choices: “So *you* decide whether or not we need to know 15 facts about this or 10 facts.” As discussed in the authority chapter, she is delegating some of her classroom authority to students through statements

like this, but she is also retaining control. Liz Turner reveals she is knowledgeable when it comes to how to do research, by asking in references #3, and #s 5-9 above whether students have generated a research question. Liz Turner both keeps students in charge of their work and guides them in how to be successful at their research. Her message is both that students are experts and that she knows what procedure experts should follow to acquire knowledge. She even tries to “sell” the act of researching in reference #10, allowing that it can be “boring” but also like “detective work.”

### ***Further disruption of classroom space: The privilege walk***

The “powder keg” day, described in the previous chapter on authority, led to the aforementioned intervention activity in which students participated in a “privilege walk,” a day that further disrupted classroom space. The privilege walk was chosen because in the powder keg day white male privilege became an issue, after a discussion about Callahan’s father owning slaves led to a contentious discussion about slavery, resulting in Liz Turner feeling so oppressed she was tempted to switch to another book. In the following section, I will show how a spatial analysis adds another level of understanding to what is happening in class that day.

### **Visual and verbal analysis of the privilege walk**

What makes the privilege walk different from other classroom activities is that the facilitator makes discursive moves that students respond to spatially rather than discursively. This simple difference—that discourse isn’t responded to with verbal discourse, but rather with movement—necessitates a different methodological approach than pure discourse analysis. While some protocols exist for how to break transcripts into

sections (the turn-taking in conversation analysis, for example), there is less direction on how to demarcate sections of unedited videotape meaningfully. General film conventions designate a “cut” as a boundary between film segments, but in the case of much research video, the camera is left to run for an entire class period, resulting in no cuts except at the very end of the class. To analyze research video, it is useful to create smaller segments that lend themselves to deep analysis, what Pea and Hoffert (2006) call “chunking.” Because my camera remained static, placed at the back corner of the room—a pre-production strategy that emphasizes the teacher as subject—I determined the boundaries of segments based not on changes in camera angles or cuts, but in changes in the macro physical movements of the class.

The video of the privilege walk consists of eleven visual segments. In Visual Segment #1, the students are waiting for class to begin. The desks have been pushed against the wall and some are stacked on top of others. Students are sitting in the available unstacked desks or standing around the periphery of the room. In Visual Segment #2 students are forming a circle and holding hands. In Visual Segment #3 students form two lines, facing the window of the classroom, with their backs to the door, and in Visual Segment #4 they begin moving forward or backward from their starting place on the line, based on their responses to statements from the facilitator. Visual Segment #5 is the longest; students are standing in place while talking about what happened in Visual Segment #4. In Visual Segment #6 students are reacting to the teacher’s talk. Visual Segment #7 consists of everyone unstacking and moving the desks from periphery back into rows. In #8 we see the students sitting at desks and writing reflections. Handing in reflections to the researcher is the principal action in Visual

Segment #9; then, we see Visual Segment #10, in which students are exiting the class. In the final Visual Segment, #11, the teacher neatens the classroom while the researcher talks with a student. A chart of the Visual Segments appears below. I tracked whether the predominant movements in each segment were typical or atypical of this particular classroom because I was interested in what students' micro movements, combined with their discourse and written reflections might reveal about their reactions to their activity and their understanding.

*Figure 4.3.* Table of visual segments

Visual Segments	Title of segment	Length of segment	Primary movements/noteworthy events in this "chunk" of video
1	Waiting for the activity to start	00:00-00:26	Desks have been pushed against the wall; students are sitting on them or standing
2	Forming a circle and holding hands	00:26-00:36	Boy holds hands with girl on right, but not boy on left
3	Forming two lines	00:36-02:55	White males stand in front line without being asked to do so
4	Moving forward or backward from starting place on line	02:55-12:06	As students move forward and backward, different groups appear in the camera's view
5	Standing in place while talking about what happened in Visual Segment #4	12:06-33:17	The students are still, and the facilitator walks around a lot
6	Reacting to teacher talk	33:17-38:45	Teacher cries and a student runs across the room to hug teacher.
7	Moving desks from periphery back into rows	38:45-40:37	Student hands out paper; researcher gives directions for writing reflection
8	Sitting at desks and writing reflections	40:37-44:25	Lack of off-task behavior
9	Handing in reflections to the researcher	44:25-47:50	Students walk up to researcher, hand her reflections.
10	Exiting class	47:50-48:08	Students walk out the door
11	Teacher neatens classroom; researcher talks with student	48:08-52:24	No sound for this part.

Considering the Foucauldian interpretation of the classroom space described at the beginning of this chapter, the movements described starting with Visual Segment #1 are quite disruptive. Students are “freed” of the constraints of their desks, but show a propensity to return to this position: as many students as can fit at the desks are sitting in them, and the remainder are spread out around the periphery of the room. This arrangement, as sketched in the still shot below, is atypical of the moments before the teacher has started the class. More typically, students would be milling around the room prior to the start of the class. The modality of most students is tentative or even unwilling and the affect is low. In the visual/verbal transcript I have prepared, the facilitator asks twice for the students to rise: once for students to “stand up,” once for them to “get up.” The repetition of her request suggests the facilitator has “read” the presenting action of the students as reluctant to participate in the privilege walk activity. Besides the fact that the activity of the day is different and the room looks different because of the desks being pulled back, there is also the change in the number of adults in the room. While students have probably grown accustomed to having both the teacher and researcher in the room, on this day there is also the facilitator and another teacher, for a total of four adults, something quite unusual in a high school classroom.

*Figure 4.4. Visual Segment #1: Waiting for activity to start*



The facilitator asks students to hold hands, and despite their reluctance, students generally comply with her request in Visual Segment #2:

*Figure 4.5. Visual Segment #2: Holding hands*



She says, “You have to be close to each other,” an unusual request given the fixed spatial arrangements of bodies in previous classes. As you can see in this visual segment, sketched above, the boy in the foreground holds hands with the girl to his right, but not with the boy to his left; instead he holds his hand behind his back, a representing action

which clearly states his unwillingness to hold hands with the boy.

This segment is very brief. It seems that the facilitator has again “read” the presenting (and perhaps representing) action of the class, and she decides not to have them hold hands. Instead, she moves quickly to having them form two lines, as shown in

*Figure 4.6. Lining up for the privilege walk*



Students are now in intimate space with each other. The affect of many of the students shows their discomfort at being in this space. That is, their faces are unexpressive, unsmiling, and many of them look down. In the front row, there is a white girl, her mixed-race close friend, and then three white males. On the video one can see the following: in the back row, there is a white male student with mild autism, the researcher, and three African American girls. It is interesting that without any discursive cue from the facilitator, the most privileged members of the class generally chose to stand in the front line and the least privileged chose to stand in the back. It is almost as if the students' bodies predict the outcome of the activity—white males will be far in front, African American females far in back, and white females, mixed race males, lower class students, and learning-disabled students in the middle.

When the facilitator begins to make statements about race, class, gender, and sexual orientation and asks students to take steps forward and backward in response to the statements, students eagerly begin moving forward or backward. To return to Foucault, this is a highly disciplining classroom activity. Students are ranked according to gender, race, class and sexual orientation. There is total surveillance, both by teachers and by other students, and by the facilitator, so noncompliance is not an easy option, nor is passivity. In contrast to more typical classroom activities, in which students can respond in writing that others generally can not see or by choosing silence rather than contributing verbally to class discussion, in the privilege walk activity, each student has to respond physically and visibly to each of the facilitator's statements, which translates into a "new" spatial arrangement of the classroom. I put "new" in quotations because as I noted in the previous section, the African American girls already had established a pattern of sitting together in the back of the classroom, a pattern they followed by standing in the back row when they were asked to line up in two rows. What makes this activity different is that now discourse ("If your ancestors were forced to come to the U.S. not by choice, take one step backward") is attached to that spatial arrangement. The attachment of discourse to spatial patterns makes those patterns visible, and thus, less easy to ignore.

At the end of the walk, the white male students were at the front of the room, having run out of space to take any more steps forward, and the female African American students were at the back of the classroom, having run out of space to move further backwards. If we had been in a larger room, the gap between the students in front and the students in back would have been greater. During the activity, the students were

unusually quiet. Although the statements made by the facilitator had to do with race, gender, sexual orientation, and class, the following analysis focuses on race because race was central to the conflict on the “powder keg” day, a conflict that led to the privilege walk.

The uncustomary silence of the students suggests that the activity was having a strong impact on them. When the facilitator invited students to discuss their reactions, there were no responses at first. The first audible student response came in response to this question:

- Facilitator: What do you observe and what do you think happened?  
Student: A lot of discrimination.  
Facilitator: A lot of discrimination by?  
Student: Because of color or race.  
Facilitator: Because of color or race. OK, anybody else to add to that? What happened? What do you think happened? And how did this exercise make you feel? (1.0) It’s an open-ended question. How did it make you feel? (4.0)  
Ratsa: Kind of sickened.  
Facilitator: Why?  
Ratsa: Because everyone says that like the white male is upper in society and obviously from this, it looks like this, because they’re all up front, and uh, yeah.

Ratsa, a blond female student with Mexican heritage, usually has no problem expressing views counter to the majority of the group, but even her reluctance to speak is palpable, as she ends her statement with “uh” and “yeah.” Students showed reticence in answering the facilitator’s questions. There were some long silences, as indicated by the numbers in parentheses. On the videotape, one can see the students standing still in the places where they arrived at the end of the privilege walk. Their body language reveals their discomfort. Tiffany repeatedly fidgets with her hair; Carl twists his body from side to side. Students are unwilling to acknowledge who is at the front of the walk (the white

male students). When the first substantive student comment is made, that what happened was “a lot of discrimination,” and the facilitator makes a leading comment: “A lot of discrimination *by*,” the student sidesteps the question. Given the characteristic of Habitus (Bourdieu, 1977) to structure itself by its very structures, while the agent of structuring remains invisible, it is not surprising that students have a hard time assigning an agent to the discrimination articulated in this segment. Instead of naming *who* might be doing the discriminating, the student instead says *how* there could be discrimination: “because of color or race,” which continues to avoid assigning agency.

The facilitator then commented on the silence: “You’re a very quiet class.” When I said that was “unusual” for this group, the facilitator followed up on that until finally, Allie, a white female, suggested that it might be unusual because it is an “awkward” situation. Let’s take another look at this segment introduced in the methodology chapter:

256 F: Why is it an awkward situation?  
257 A: Because it visual — it visually shows — >no, now don’t take any  
258 offense< — it visually shows us the racial differences in our classroom.  
259 ‘cause well usually, it’s not — you know we’re all sitting down and we all  
260 kind of contribute. It’s not any — like dead silent. But it’s an awkward  
261 situation and knowing — and every time someone took a step backward,  
262 you knew that they were — it was like a worse-off situation or that they  
263 had been through something else that you haven’t experienced.

Although I did a close and critical analysis of Allie’s<sup>43</sup> language in the methodology chapter, I want to emphasize some particular features of the passage in terms of space. Allie shows some acknowledgment of how the spatial positioning of students at the end of the privilege walk represents the racial divide in Liz Turner’s classroom when she says that the situation “visually shows us the racial differences in our classroom.” As I have

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<sup>43</sup> Allie is not visible on the videotape as she speaks, so there are no comments on her body movements.

established in previous chapters, these differences were already quite visual (from the first few days in class, I noted in my field journal how the African American girls sat together at the back of the classroom). What is different about the privilege walk is that it spatially recreates the inequities in the classroom specifically by tying the spatial movements to discursive statements about race, class, gender and sexual orientation. Perhaps because this seating arrangement is both voluntary and “reasonable” given the racial climate of the school, the phenomenon is not visible to students. As is pointed out in Tatum’s work, it is easier not to notice that black students are sitting together in the cafeteria (or to attribute it to other reasons) because to do so would mean one would have to acknowledge the racism that shapes this seating arrangement (Tatum, 1997). Because there is no visible external agent positioning the African American students in this way, Foucault’s theory of spatial positioning as a disciplining technique is useful. One possibility is that the African American girls have internalized racism to the degree that they self-position themselves in the classroom in a segregated, and (by choosing the back of the classroom) low-status, manner.

Another notable part of Allie’s response is the phrase, “we all kind of contribute.” In my field notes I recorded that this is not the case. The African American girls spoke more to each other rather than contributing to the overall class discussion. Who is the “we” in Allie’s response? If she is speaking for all of the class, her statement is not accurate. Is the “we” just the white students in class? Allie’s qualification, the “kind of” in “we all *kind of* contribute” changes her statement and suggests that perhaps Allie herself recognizes almost subconsciously that not everyone has been equally contributing to class discussion. With a significant portion of the class not speaking, it has become

habitual for the rest of the class to not listen, in the rhetorical sense (Ratcliffe, 2005) outlined in Chapter 5 on friendship as method.

Recognizing the spatial differences opened the way for de-silencing the race issues in the classroom. After Allie's comment, the students opened up more. Keanna, the African American girl who had slammed in and out of the classroom the previous week, spoke, but in a barely audible tone of voice: "I thought it was just me. This shows me that other students have had a hard time just like I have." Another African American girl, Tasleem, said, "Just because no one talks about it doesn't mean it's not going on." The majority of those who spoke were at the back of the privilege walk, and typically, most of those students rarely spoke in the class. Ms. Kranston, the teacher who was observing the activity, said in a later interview:

The thing that was most striking to me seemed to be the African American students' gladness at being able to share some of these hard parts of their lives, claim them because they didn't have to say this happened to me. Someone else put forth, "Have you ever had this happen in your family?" and they would be considered bad things, hard things to deal with and yet, the African Americans, especially the girls as I'm recalling, that were right over by me, they were just claiming those. And it felt to me like they were relieved to be able to just declare this in a situation that was as safe as it was. (personal communication, May 18, 2006)

As these students spoke, there were significant micro movements. For example, students rotated like girasole<sup>44</sup> turning to face students who were talking about the experience of doing the privilege walk. By facing those who are speaking, student bodies communicate a higher level of presenting engagement.

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<sup>44</sup> Girasole means sunflower in Italian. "Gira" is from "girare," the verb "to turn" and "sole" means sun, so the name describes the movement of the plant. Students, unconstrained by desks, rotate to face the speakers as sunflowers rotate to face the sun.

As a researcher and participant in the activity, I felt that the unusual silence of the students was a *listening* kind of silence in the rhetorical sense. Rhetorical listening involves “a stance of openness that a person may choose to assume in relation to any person, text, or culture; its purpose is to cultivate conscious identifications in ways that promote productive communication, especially but not solely cross-culturally” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 25). The reason I think students were taking this stance is there was an absence of the kind of nonverbal cues that might suggest disengagement. Their physical movements, alert and attuned to whomever spoke seem to confirm this, although most maintained a very low affect at the same time. Analyzing their reflections, which I will do in the next section, gives one an expanded sense of what the students understood from the experience.

As the follow-up discussion was coming to a close, the facilitator asked, “How long do we have?” and for the first time, Liz Turner (out of view of the camera) spoke. Although I have analyzed her speech in Chapter Three, what I want to emphasize here is that while choosing not to physically occupy the position at the back of the room behind all of her students, she discursively constructs herself into that space.

The facilitator is responsible for making statements that cause students to change the kinds of movements they are making, but occasionally students move independently of the group and of the researcher’s directions. It is only through segmenting the video and identifying the patterns of group movements that such individual, spontaneous movements become apparent. For example, in Visual Segment #5, most students are still standing in the spot where they landed after responding to the facilitator’s statements during the privilege walk. Tasleem breaks ranks to run across the classroom to hug Ms.

Turner, who has started to cry as she talks about race. This movement encapsulates the sequence of spatial movements that contributed to the transformation in this classroom. By the sequence, I mean Tasleem's self-imposed, invisible self-segregation in the back of the classroom, her visible and spatial entrapment at the back of the privilege walk, and her breaking of rank to physically and emotively connect with Liz Turner when she cries as she realizes her participation in the privilege walk would have placed her behind all of her students, including Tasleem. Seen within the context of the preceding spatial analysis, Tasleem's act of running is liberatory because she breaks out of the spatial positioning that students have been expected to follow. She chooses an emotive connection over keeping in her place in the classroom. Knowing that in the following weeks, Tasleem begins contributing more to class discussion and sitting near the front of the classroom, we can also say it is transformative.

### **Written responses to the privilege walk**

The written reflections gave students an opportunity to process what they had experienced in the privilege walk. These reflections also provided a different modality of expression. For those who felt they could not make space physically and verbally to respond to the activity, there was the opportunity to open up a written space to voice their thoughts. The direction for the written reflection was quite simple: students were asked to write "a response" to the experience of participating in the privilege walk.

What did students understand from the privilege walk experience? Some students talked about their understanding, but many were silent. But what does it mean to understand? Wiggins and McTighe's six-facet model of understanding includes explanation, interpretation, application, perspective, empathy, and self-knowledge. I

coded the student responses for evidence of understanding, according to Wiggins and McTighe’s model (2005) because it helped me to consider not only whether students understood the activity, but what kinds of understanding they demonstrated.

*Figure 4.7. Six facets of understanding*

Facet	Wiggins and McTighe’s definitions
<b>explanation</b>	sophisticated and apt theories and illustrations, which provide knowledgeable and justified accounts of events, actions, and ideas
<b>interpretation</b>	interpretations, narratives, and translations that provide meaning
<b>application</b>	ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse, realistic contexts
<b>perspective</b>	critical and insightful points of view
<b>empathy</b>	the ability to get inside another person’s feelings and worldview
<b>self-knowledge</b>	the wisdom to know one’s ignorance and how one’s pattern of thought and action inform as well as prejudice understanding

*Empathy: the most common kind of understanding demonstrated*

In coding student responses, it became clear that the most common kinds of understanding that appeared in the students’ written reflections were those of empathy and self-knowledge:

I learned that some are affected in life more than others because of their race, ethnicity, and gender, some who are not male suffer more and have more difficult experiences in life, just like those of a different background. (Arthur)

The privilege walk was very interesting and it really made me realize that there are some people that are not as privileged and they have to go through a lot more than I thought. (Zeb)

I liked this activity because you would never think that a lot of people would have been through the same things that you have been through. (Keanna)

We need to take a look around because all races go through the same thing we go through. (Keanna)

I don’t think it is right to judge someone from where they come from because it’s not their fault and they can’t help it. (Tay-Tay)

Given that the teacher had just cried in front of the students before they wrote these responses, it is not surprising that many of them showed empathy, even referencing the teacher's tears directly: "This whole experience made me think about how we treat each other and where we all come from. Like when Ms. Turner was talkin' she made me want to cry because it's like everything that she was sayin' is so true and I appreciate her very much. She is wonderful teacher" (Gabriella).

*Self-knowledge: Students show an understanding of the their own limits*

Examples of self-knowledge show varying kinds of understanding. For example, while a white male student, Greg, said, "To me, it was surprising how many were in the back," two African American students were not at all surprised. Lyric said, "I thought that the privilege walk was not at all shocking," and Tasleem, an African American female stated, "I wasn't surprised when I saw that most of the white kids were in the front of the class and the black students were way in the back. If somebody would have made me predict, I would have gotten everything correct." Tasleem's comment is an example of how the oppressed always know more about the oppressor than vice-versa.

Other examples of student understanding that exemplified self-knowledge showed an acknowledgement of race issues as complex. For example, Keanna pointed out, "I've been discriminated against by my own race before." And Tay-Tay's reflection shows how his ignorance of the dynamics of privilege can be frustrating: "I just don't understand how the class you're in can affect you for your whole life." Tay-Tay has a white mother and African American father. Zeb acknowledged that the activity made visible what is usually hidden: "You may think there is no racism left, but it goes to show that there is still a lot of it, you just can't see most of it in your everyday life." Arthur is another student who demonstrated understanding of the invisibility of race issues in their

lives: “This shows that racism still lives, not in the open, but in other ways.” Because the activity did raise students’ consciousness about race (and class and gender and sexual orientation issues), some students began to reflect on what they could do: “I think discrimination usually goes away with generations, but sometimes more action is necessary” (Carl). In a reflection that showed self-understanding, Ratsa said, “This made me realize how much my Mexican background affects my life.” Another student who talked about the teacher’s tears, I categorized under self-knowledge because the student recognized her own confusion: “The comment made by Ms. Turner I didn’t really understand why she started crying? It was confusing for me” (Jessica). Perhaps there is a limit to what students can absorb about privilege in a single class period.

#### *Perspective as understanding*

A less common facet of understanding than the examples of empathy and self-knowledge discussed above, is that of perspective, or “The ability to see other plausible points of view” while seeing from a distance from one’s own point of view (Wiggins & McTiche, 2005; 105). Kyla wrote, “Activities like this really do affect people. Activities like this can either separate a group or bring it together.” Doing the privilege walk right after the “powder keg” day was a big risk, for the very reason that Kyla describes.

#### *Evaluation as understanding*

Three of the students—all white males—were evaluative in their written responses. One of the responses was positive, one was negative and one was mixed. Greg wrote, “I felt that the privilege walk was a cool experiment.” Chuck disagreed: “I felt that this activity was unnecessary because I already know about other people’s status as well as mine. This just made people feel bad about how they grew up...My friends and I know about the things that happen. We didn’t need them to go public.” Chuck’s written

response illustrates the desire to remain what Pollock describes as “colormute” (Pollock, 2004). Brandon’s response was mixed: “This is a great lesson activity and works really well, but I have a few problems with it. I think there is a slight moral issue with teaching kids about discriminating systems by slamming a label on each and every one of them. Maybe you could hand out cards that designate your temporary race and class. Just a thought. And is it just me or are all of our methods of solving racism by using counter racism?” Brandon’s word choice, “slamming,” conveys his sense that he has been done a violence by being labeled. His idea of handing out cards to assign a temporary race and class suggests that participating in the activity with his actual identity was uncomfortable.

The privilege walk disrupted the space of the classroom, and the facilitator drew out student talk about race in a new and deeper way than the students had talked about it before. The students were asked to occupy a new listening space, that of “standing under” to listen to cross-cultural discussion and thereby come to a new understanding (Ratcliffe, 2005).

### ***De-segregation of classroom space***

After the privilege walk day, an interesting spatial change took place in the classroom, which I describe as de-segregation. The African American girls stopped sitting together at the back of the classroom, moving forward and separating, a change that persisted to the end of the school year. They sat closer to their teacher, Liz Turner. The following figure shows a typical seating arrangement after the Native American unit:

Figure 4.8. Seating in Liz Turner's classroom after the privilege walk\*<sup>45</sup>

	Teacher's Desk						
	Gabriella ♀	Tasleem ♀					
	Brandon ♂	Zeb ♂				Ashae ♀	Keanna ♀
Tay-Tay ♀	Chuck ♂	Lyric ♀				Shay ♀	
Greg ♂	Ratsa ♀	Joe ♂				Arthur ♂	Tiffany ♀
	Jeff ♂	John ♂		Kyla ♀	Jessica ♀		Carl ♂
			researcher				

\*Names are pseudonyms chosen by the students.

Empty desk
  African American student
  white student

= male student
  = female student

<sup>45</sup> Allie, a white female student, does not appear on this chart because she hurt her ankle and would sit at the front of the room to elevate it for the two weeks after the privilege walk.

In member-checking about whether students noticed this change, the girls said they moved because Ms. Turner told them to quit sitting at the back of the classroom. In looking at my field notes, I found that Ms. Turner did indeed say that, but it was before the Native American unit began, and the students did not move at that time. They only began moving after the privilege walk day, an observation with which Liz Turner concurs.

In the final survey, I asked the students, “From looking at the transcripts of the videotapes and doing follow-up interviews, it appears that the privilege walk day was a pivotal moment in the unit. How did this activity affect you?” Student responses were quite varied, from anger at parents, to a couple of claims that it had no effect. The most common response stated that it helped the student see differences in the class. As Allie said, “It made us face our differences and backgrounds.” A couple of students saw a wider application for the experience: “I learned that racism and segregation are hidden behind the [word?] of society, so we are blinded to what is actually happening out there” (Arthur).

I also asked students, “How did the privilege walk activity change the class?” Most said they learned something new about each other, or “It showed us that we all have grown up with different difficulties,” as Gabriella put it. Kyla said, “It brought us together,” and Tiffany wrote, “I think it made everyone look at the world differently.” In the last question, I asked, “Pretend you are the researcher, what could this change mean?” The change I was talking about was the new spatial arrangement of the classroom. Student responses varied, but the most common words used to describe the change were “comfort” and “open”:

- We need to be more open in our society
- That we are aware of segregation and racism and are fighting against it
- That they felt they could agree with what others were saying
- There was no CHANGE!
- That Mrs. Sassi helped everyone!
- more acceptance
- I don't know
- It would be worse
- That they could maybe feel more comfortable
- That they will start or started to open up
- that people feel more comfortable later on
- blank

Along with spatial changes, there were discursive changes. The previously common storyline—that we don't need to talk about race—also changed, and students, especially the African American students, talked about race nearly every day. Students who had some experience with or thought deeply about race and culture spoke more often during the Native American unit than those who did not. As the unit progressed, both African American and white students began to reveal their Native American ancestry. This racial and cultural identity, though not especially strong, is interesting in that it provided a secondary identity that both African American and white students could claim. Several times Liz Turner said that the Native American unit “healed” her classroom.

Language about cultural background, that of the author, the teacher, the students, and the community are of greater importance to students' understanding during a Native American unit than I anticipated when I created the research questions for this study. In following a Grounded Theory approach to data analysis, in which the questions evolved as the study progressed, I have arrived at an argument for engaging in spatial analysis alongside discursive analysis of classroom interactions when students study NA/AI literatures. The spatial issues in the particular NA/AI text studied, *Wynema*, while not causal, most likely had an effect on students. And while I cannot say definitively what caused the desegregation of Liz Turner's classroom, certainly the privilege walk and repeated references to issues of race made audible and visible differences that the students had not previously noticed. What happened in this classroom offers a counternarrative to colormuteness and colorblindness, that merely perpetuate the inequity of our society. There is indication of student understanding, especially empathy, self-knowledge, and perspective, as well as evidence of rhetorical listening.

This chapter has attempted to amplify our understanding of how language and space are used in a variety of ways—to construct or deconstruct cultural knowledge, to bolster student understanding through teacher affordances, and to allow students to position themselves spatially and discursively relative to other students and the material under study. It is significant that these changes took place during a Native American unit of study because the particular novel studied, *Wynema*, deals with space on several levels, from the interplay between space and place in Wynema's Indian village when her father chooses to build a school there, to the issue of allotment brought out by the Dawes Act, a law that continues to affect all of us, Native and non-Native today.

## Chapter Five

### **“If you weren’t researching me and a friend . . .”: Problematizing Friendship as Method and Applying Rhetorical Listening**

*The truth about stories is that’s all we are. –Thomas King*

Chapter Five has a story to tell about the experience of engaging in this research project. As the title of this chapter implies, Liz Turner would not have persisted in teaching *Wynema*—and hence this study would not exist—if not for friendship. Therefore, the story of how this friendship was cultivated, threatened, and restored merits its own chapter. It simply outgrew the methodology chapter, an organic development that my research orientation makes room for. Following my argument from the introduction that the complex endeavor of both teaching and studying the teaching of Native American/American Indian literatures requires a variety of interdisciplinary methods, in this chapter I give more latitude to the method of narratology, or telling stories. Storytelling seems especially appropriate when one is working with Native issues because the teaching and learning inherent in stories is an essential feature of Native ways of knowing (Blaeser, 1997; King, 2003). Stories are an important feature of the American Indian intellectual tradition: learning is storied (Powell, 2007). That is, the story, or narrative, is the primary method of teaching and learning. A story has at least three basic elements: 1) a situation involving some predicament, conflict, or struggle, 2) an animate protagonist who engages in the situations for a purpose, and 3) a sequence with implied causality (i.e. a plot) during which the predicament is resolved in some

fashion (Carter, 1993; 6). The use of story or narrative is also characteristic of feminist research, and friendship as methodology originally grew out of the work of feminist researchers. A third justification for the choice of narrative is its use to describe classrooms in educational research: “Narrative method, in its simplest terms, is the description and restorying of the narrative structure of varieties of educational experience” (Clandinin and Connelly, 1989; 4). To restory, I started out with an intent to take an action-researcher approach, and as I made moves to become involved in the classroom by sharing the teacher’s burden of reading student papers, helping students with small-group and individual activities, etc., I developed a relationship with the classroom teacher that was collegial. We discussed grading rubrics, individual students’ learning needs, our previous experiences as classroom teachers, and soon, more personal topics like balancing family and work, our perceptions of graduate school, and even our childhoods, and our experiences with race and gender in our professional and personal lives. Through such talk, boundaries became blurred between researcher and researched, and we became closer friends.

It was Liz Turner who initially labeled our relationship as friendship and set the precedent for a particular way of relating to each other: on my first day with students in the classroom, to the first period, she introduced me as her “friend”; to the next period, she introduced me as her “good friend”; and to the third period, she said I was her “very good friend.” At the time, I was struck by the repetition of the term “friend” and the accretion of the modifiers attached to the term, and a bit surprised that she did not introduce me as a “researcher” or “colleague,” but I was also flattered that even though we had been working together for a short while, she (like I) felt positively about our

relationship, enough to label it a friendship in front of her students. But what did that mean? And what would be the implications of being positioned as a friend for the purposes of this research project? How did being positioned as a friend affect her authority with students as well as mine?

One of the patterns arising from my Grounded Theory approach to data analysis was a blending of research work with moves like caring, giving, everyday involvement—in other words, friendship. Negotiating the boundary between researcher and researched was (and is) an ongoing activity in this project. Hayano (1979) discusses how distinctions between inside and outside, between researcher and researched are becoming increasingly blurred, and she points out that the insider/outsider relationship is not dichotomous, but instead represents a continuum. This perspective stresses that it is not the scientific detachment of the researcher as complete stranger that ensures validity, but knowledge of where one is along as many dimensions of that continuum as possible. Our friendship evolved over the course of the project, and so did the point we occupied on the continuum between researcher and researched. Because much of what is to follow about friendship and listening has to do with relationships and identities, I will attempt to lay out some similarities and differences between Liz and me.

Liz Turner and I have a shared status as graduate students in the same doctoral program, but our relative status is more complex than that. For example, I am two years ahead of Liz in our program, and though I am not her “assigned” mentor, she often claims me as her mentor when talking to me and to other graduate students and the directors of our program. We are both female, and both of us at times speak from a feminist perspective. Our families stem from the lower economic class—hers urban and mine

rural. Each of us will be the first person in our families to earn a doctorate. Liz and I have both been high school teachers for several years.

In looking at our differences, first and foremost, I list race. I am white; Liz is black, but there is more to it than that. The variety of skin tone in Liz Turner's immediate and extended family tells the story of her mixed race background that includes Native American ancestry. My maternal great-grandparents immigrated to the U.S. from northern Finland in the early 1900s; my paternal great-grandparents emigrated from Norway. Although punished for speaking Finnish at the small-town school she attended in North Dakota, my grandmother remained fluent in her mother's language, and I traveled with her and several other relatives to Finland in 1981, where I met my relatives there. Curious about family rumors that we had "Lapp" (a derogatory term for the Sami, indigenous people of northern Scandinavia) in our blood, I participated in a DNA test that revealed I do indeed have the genotype (U51b) most common among Sami people.

Another difference between Liz and me is age. I am 11 years older than Liz. She is single; I am married. She does not have children; I have two. Talk about our similarities and differences is threaded through our everyday conversations, and at times we claim some aspects of our identities and not others. Far from irrelevant, this consideration of similarities and differences is central to research:

Critical to my understanding of the research situation at any given moment was my answer to the questions: How is this woman like me? How is she not like me? How are these similarities and differences being played out in our interaction? How is that interaction affecting the course of the research? How is it illuminating and/or obscuring the research problem? (Christman, 1988; 80)

In a paper she presented at the National Women's Studies Association annual conference in 2007, Liz Turner addressed some of these questions herself. In writing about her

experience as the only graduate student woman of color in our program, she said her growing friendship with me was possible because I wasn't "fakin' the funk." Liz wrote, "I viewed and still view . . . her kindness not as paternalism, not as white guilt, but as overtures to friendship. This is how I express friendship myself—through the giving of time and care. My gut feeling is, and always has been, that [Kelly] is sincere in her passion for social justice, feminist imperatives, and humanity." Liz's words are generous; in fact, I have suffered from white guilt at times and have questioned whether my mentoring of Liz has bordered on paternalism. My cultural perspective is undoubtedly white, and my origination from and connection to the homogenous North Dakota cultural environment is a background against which I constantly struggle. I agree with Liz about my sincerity in friendship, social justice, and feminist imperatives.

### ***Research potential of friendship as method***

Although the study of "friendship" was not something I originally planned, I came to see Tillmann-Healy's point that "friendship and fieldwork are similar endeavors" (2003; 732) which could account for why it felt so natural for our friendship to develop as it did. Our shared interest in critical pedagogy and social justice issues may have influenced our experience of what I believe is one of the greatest potentials of friendship as methodology, the possibility that the bonds "take on political dimensions" and lead to the potential for "dual consciousness-raising" and for "members of dominant groups . . . to serve as advocates for friends in target groups" (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; 731). Liz Turner saw the potential of advocacy in her relationship with her students: "having a white, university researcher designating my classroom worthy to be researched would help skeptical students understand that yes, competence can actually come dipped in

chocolate” (L. Turner, personal communication, July 3, 2007). We also experienced “dual consciousness-raising” in that Liz frequently helped me to see distinctions between various critical race theorists, such as the particular attitudes held about “therapeutic alienation” in John McWhorter’s work compared to Beverly Tatum’s. For her part, Liz described her worldview as a “seduction of sameness,” which she elaborated thus:

I could only “garner respect, friendship, and love in the black world that had nurtured me all my life . . . . Conversely, I could not trust white, middle-class, privileged women, or teach their children without risking my racial identity, psychological well-being, and personal integrity. . . . Kelly, along with three wonderful professors . . . helped me reconfigure my world. . . that indeed, some of those with access to privilege could be not only allies, but could see our common humanity. (personal communication, July 3, 2007)

The benefit to my research project is that the establishment of our friendship meant that as a researcher I became privy to personal statements like the one cited above. It is doubtful Liz Turner would talk about “trust” and risks to her “racial identity” with a more distanced researcher. The change that Liz explains above illustrates one of the benefits of the friendship as method model for participants: “the experience of empathic connection with friend/researcher . . . can help participants feel heard, known, and understood” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; 737). Speaking to the social justice agenda inherent in such advocacy and dual consciousness-raising, those who are “‘just friends’ can become *just* friends, interpersonal and political allies who seek personal growth, meaningful relationships, and social justice” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; 731). As the quotes above demonstrate, all three are important to Liz Turner and me.

In addition to aiding a social justice agenda, friendship as method can improve the kind of data collected. Researchers such as Christman, who writes about working in the field as a female friend, detail how their positioning as a friend to their participants leads

to the collection of different kinds of data and also determines a different relationship with that data. For example, women often speak with more “candor” to female friends and the developing friendships lead researchers to “a kind of collaboration in the research process that further chip[s] away at researcher/subject distinctions” (Christman, 1988; 76). “Friendship as method can bring us to a level of understanding and depth of experience we may be unable to reach using only traditional methods” (Hillman-Tealy, 2003; 737). Statements like this point to the potential benefits—what researcher doesn’t want to get to a new level of understanding or reach greater depth of experience?

Another affordance of friendship as method that I noticed in this project is the influence a friendship can have on data analysis and method. As explained in the methodology section, the rich case I chose to focus on for this dissertation—the powder keg day and the privilege walk—arose from my friend’s concerns. It is because I care about Liz Turner and I heard her pain that my consciousness of these as significant events was raised. As established in the introduction, the teaching of NA/AI literatures can be fraught with tensions, so it is useful that the person experiencing those tensions guide the research on what is significant in that situation. It is because of what Liz Turner revealed in her personal e-mail message to me that I made choices as a researcher to study authority.

To add to facilitating a social justice agenda, creating a rich data set, and shaping the analysis in a direction relevant to the minority teacher, another affordance of friendship as method for my study was writing the dissertation with the participant as one of the readers. If not for my sense of duties as a friend and mentor, I may not have given every draft of my work to Liz Turner to read, as I did. Having her in mind as one of my

readers meant frequent reflection on how my writing might be perceived by her. That kind of reflection kept me grounded in the practice of teaching, of the concerns of the classroom, which may have helped my study better serve the needs of the community I studied.

But can we, as researchers, intentionally design our research projects for friendship in the same way we select our sites and build a data analysis strategy? The difference, of course, is that we can select a person with whom we want to become friends, but that person also has a choice—to accept or reject our friendship. The affordances I’ve laid out above are not guaranteed to come with a friendship as method approach. However, some conditions make the possibility of friendship more likely in a research situation.

One condition is that of researchers studying their own group. Hayano argues that such researchers are more likely to have “an involvement and intimacy” with their “subjects” (as cited in Christman, 1988; 73). Liz Turner and I have a double shared status—as secondary English teachers and as graduate students—which set the stage for, though in no way guaranteed, friendship to arise between us. Another condition that promotes friendship is an abundance of everyday conversations rather than structured interviews that reinforce the research/researched distinction. Like Christman, who found it difficult “to think of the conversations in [her] study as interviews” (1988; 74), I noticed that much of the recorded talk between Liz and me sounds like everyday conversation between friends/colleagues. There is attention to each other’s families, commiseration about the work load, supportive problem solving, and sharing about programmatic concerns—in other words, the talk is holistic rather than limited to

research questions. While much of this talk might appear irrelevant to my research project, it is actually quite relevant and even necessary to my critical agenda. Christman argues that it was her “shared status” with her research subjects (married returning graduate student with children) that allowed and encouraged women to speak of issues that might be seen by outsiders (for example, men or childless women) as irrelevant to research on women’s graduate study (1988; 76). In other words, shared status leads to seemingly tangential talk, but within this talk there are often insights that would be inaccessible in a more formal environment.

While I agree that methodology that includes friendship can yield more and different kinds of data than less intimate approaches, there are also risks involved that can damage the relationship and even the research project itself. Simply being in a friendship relationship can make participants more vulnerable because the intimacy of friendship can lead them to reveal things they would not had they been in a more formal research-participant relationship (Stacey, 1991). Before exploring the potential risks, I will present the model of friendship as methodology theorized by Tillman-Healy.

### ***Features of friendship***

One of the challenges of pursuing friendship as method is deciding how to analyze data that looks very much like everyday conversations. But even everyday conversations are tactical (deCerteau, 1984), and thus offer a rich source for rhetorical analysis. Conversation implies both speaking and listening, but the latter is a less studied trope (Ratcliffe, 2005). In Tillman-Healy’s (2003) theorization of “friendship as method,” she argues that the researcher’s “primary procedures are those we use to build and sustain friendship: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability”



16           business.  
17  
18           I'll talk with her tomorrow.  
19  
20           All the best,  
21           Liz  
22  
23           Date: Thu, 02 January 2006  
24           From: Kelly Sassi  
25           To: Liz Turner Subject: Re: Great News!  
26  
27           Hi, Liz,  
28           You needed the rest, girl! I just made revisions to my IRB and re-  
29           submitted it. That is fantastic news about the class set. I will let [director  
30           of our graduate program] know right away! I can't wait to see you and  
31           your students tomorrow. Let me know the time the first class starts and  
32           your room number.  
33  
34           Thanks,  
35           Kelly

On the surface, this exchange of e-mails hardly seems important enough to analyze, but it illustrates well the kind of everyday involvement friends engage in.

While the research business of these e-mails is about procuring the right number of *Wynema* books so that Liz can teach the unit and receiving approval for the project, the tone is informal and interwoven with Liz sharing about how tired she is from working as a high school teacher during her first year in a Ph.D. program (ll. 8-10). After getting up at about 6 a.m., teaching three high school classes in the morning, and then trying to read abstract articles for a graduate course, she fell asleep for almost three hours. My response on line 28, "You needed the rest, girl," shows my caring and empathy for her challenges. I acknowledged that her sleep was "needed." I maintained the trust she showed in making herself vulnerable to the "lazy Black stereotype" (discussed later in this chapter). I shared a bit of my own challenge of the day—making revisions to the IRB and submitting it.

Our e-mail exchange shows we also share the accomplishment of getting books. She calls it “great news” that her “great” department head has agreed to buy a class set of books, and I agree that it is “fantastic news.” We use multiple exclamation marks to show our jubilation that “we’re in business.” Language like this reveals that from early on in the project we were considering this shared work. Liz also invites me to have lunch with her in the school cafeteria. This everyday conversation illustrates how there is no clear line between more traditional research activities and the interactions of friends. It also shows the early establishment of mutual caring that developed further in the project.

### **Compassion and caring**

One way that participants benefit from a “friendship as method” approach is through the experience of empathic connection with the friend/researcher, which can help participants feel heard, known, and understood” (Tillman-Healy, 2003; 737). I entered the project intending to do my research with an ethic of care. I knew from my own experience how demanding it is to teach high school, and I also understood the pressures of being a graduate student. Liz Turner was engaged in both, so I had a great deal of empathy for her. Liz Turner, whose two younger sisters are both single parents, understands the challenges of parenting and had a great deal of empathy for me. She often recognized the work of parenting (“I don’t know how you do it”) and took pains to inquire about my kids, respect our early nights at my house, and include my kids in gatherings at her house. We both had family issues during the research project, and we alternately consoled each other during our respective crises. The two class periods I focused on in this study are both instances in which compassion and caring were crucial to the continuation of the project and the well-being of the teacher.

## **Giving and helping**

Because I wanted to practice reciprocity, I positioned myself at the outset as someone willing to give whatever was necessary. While giving might seem to be a risk-free feature of friendship, it is not. My experiences with gift giving and receiving when I was a student teacher exchange student in Japan taught me how gift giving is a cultural practice. The same was true with my experiences marrying into an Italian family. My in-laws, who had made a long journey from northern Italy to attend the wedding, accompanied my husband and me on our honeymoon. Much of what we did each day was select appropriate gifts to give back to the people in Italy who had given us wedding gifts. Just a thank-you card would not do! These experiences taught me that it is not enough to just give; one must be attuned to cultural differences in the way gifts are given and received. Given the stereotype mentioned earlier that Liz Turner battles, that of African Americans as lazy, how could I offer to help without being perceived as insulting?

Fortunately, Liz took a risk early on and accepted my help without offense. Thus, I was able to read and grade a set of papers over the winter break. (I remembered how burdensome it could be, as a high school teacher, to read papers during the break, so I wanted to help with this if Liz Turner was willing). For the next paper, I volunteered to create a rubric to go along with her Rogerian essay. When I sent it to her, she wrote, “I want to thank you so much for the rubric! I have adapted the first one a bit for use with the kids on Friday as they rewrite the second draft for a third time” (personal communication February 6, 2006). By “adapting” the rubric, Liz retains control over her materials, while still expressing gratitude for my help. This felt balanced to me, and I

continued to look for opportunities to help her. Soon she trusted me enough as a friend to not only receive help, but ask for it. For example, in the excerpt from a transcript below, she asks me to take on the teacher role of reading journal entries.

LT: [whispering] Would you do one more thing for me?

KS: Yes.

LT: Would you take the journals home with you to look at? Because you see, I have a mountain, and I think it might be useful for you to get what they're thinking is about this.

KS: OK.

In the exchange above, she gives reasons for me to take the journals home and read them: she has “a mountain” of work to do, and she also is thinking of me as a researcher and recognizes that what students have written on this day would be useful for me. Liz Turner doesn't have to explain the “mountain”; she trusts I will “get it” and also empathize enough to agree to do the work, which I do.

My help was not limited to grading and preparation tasks, however. Liz Turner gave me many opportunities to assist in the classroom, opportunities I eagerly sought, out of a desire to be a good friend as well as an action researcher. In my field journal I wrote some personal reflection on the first day that shows how important it was to be a giving friend in the classroom: “I enjoyed my time in the classroom. I found ways to be useful—making cards for the homework vocabulary, reading with students, adding insights about the Greek chorus when called to by the teacher.”

By taking this initiative, Ms. Turner asked me to assist her by tracking student participation in the discussion while she facilitates the discussion:

What I wanted to do is sort of gauge, as a whole class, how you felt about or what your experiences were with the first four chapters. I will actually mark down some credit. And Mrs. Sassi is actually... she has the class list. And what I want to do is just glean some responses and we will actually give you some participation credit...

This is an example of Liz Turner spontaneously finding a way I can be helpful. Most of the ways I assisted in the classroom were not planned. For example, I might have been asked to think of a word or share some background information or check some facts:

LT: I forgot what those words are called. There's... What was it? (Turns to me)

KS: Do you mean "qualifiers"?

LT: But what kind of qualifiers are the ones that are sort of exclusionary, that don't... you know, they're not nuanced like "some" or "never"... I mean, "some" or...

KS: Absolutes.

LT: Absolutes! Yes, that's what I wanted.

In some cases, I was more of a helper to the students, a role that Liz Turner talked about openly with students. For example, when a student asked about his grade, Liz Turner said, "I'll talk with Ms. Sassi about it. I've already adjusted the grades, so... You'll see. I want to have . . . progress reports for you today, but she's still trying to boost you guys up." On April 5<sup>th</sup>, she said to the class, "I'm going to allow Ms. Sassi to mediate and raise your grades some." On a day Liz Turner had to miss class, she put me in charge: "I'm not going to be here tomorrow, so Ms. Sassi's going to be leading your post-movie discussion and also following up on Friday." I encouraged students to also be helpful to the teacher too: "Let's help Ms. Turner out by putting things back where they belong."

Near the end of the semester, Liz wrote me an e-mail message about the last day of the unit: “Thank you for being such a wonderful ‘action researcher.’ You have helped me more than you know, even as you gather data for your project.”

Although these examples of giving have to do with me as the giver and Liz Turner as the receiver, it is important not to forget that she gave the biggest gift of all—opening her classroom and life to me. She also supported me in many other ways as well: sharing dialogue about Native American issues on the children’s literature list-serve she belongs to, giving me the e-mail addresses of other staff members at her school who teach Native American topics, sharing her notes for her annual meeting with our program directors (a format I then used for my own annual meeting, to good effect), having me and my husband over for dinner, etc.

### **Vulnerability**

One of the ways that friends develop a relationship is through allowing themselves to be vulnerable at times. This is especially true in a friendship that develops during a research project. Tillman-Healy acknowledges that “relationally, doing fieldwork this way carries all the risks that friendship does. Because we invest so much of ourselves, researchers are exposed and vulnerable, which means we can be profoundly disappointed, frustrated or hurt” (2003; 737). I became aware of my vulnerability during the first test of our friendship, discussed later in this chapter. Participants are also vulnerable, but “because of the power imbalance between researcher and participants, field relationships always have the potential for colonization and exploitation.” (Tillman-Healy, 2003; 744).

Because the very content of the Native American unit I studied dealt with colonization and exploitation, these issues were never far from my mind. Vulnerability carries risks,

but it is an important part of friendship. By being vulnerable, we make space for our friend to express giving, though we also open ourselves to the possibility of betrayal.

### **Hope and Justice**

It is through friendship that we often find it possible to renew our hope in life. Many of the exchanges between Liz and me reflect our shared hope in a more just educational future for American high school students. Justice is an abstract concept that often brings people together in friendship. For Liz Turner, our shared sense of social justice drew us closer as the weeks went by in the research project; we became “*just*” friends. Many of our conversations became the grounds for us to explore our beliefs about justice. If we did not share this orientation toward social justice, it would have been much more difficult for me to do the kind of research I wanted to do because I would have had to justify my approach every step of the way. Also, in her NWSA paper Liz revealed that when she struggled with racial tensions in her classroom, it was our common belief that it was worthwhile for the students to learn about Native American literatures that helped her decide to continue.

### **Protection**

It is a natural human instinct to protect those that we care for. I was not so aware of my role as protector until I noticed a pattern of comments that Liz Turner made about how the presence of the video camera was helpful to her. She appeared to see the video as an aid to classroom management when directing the following question to me about whether she could have copies of the research tapes (said in front of her class): “Can I have copies? I think it would be nice to have copies of these tapes [laughs] and reproduce them

and send them home for spring surprises.” This was said in the midst of a discussion about midterm grades in which she was trying to convince students to turn in work before the midterm to boost their grades. She also jokingly threatened the students with using the tapes as blackmail in exchange for getting their compliance in class: “Yeah as long as you’re quiet. And then I get to keep the tape, and if anything ever comes up, I have blackmail fodder.” I don’t think there was much seriousness to these comments, but in the e-mail following the “powder keg” day, she writes, “What a day to miss, eh? And yet, I do wonder if events would have occurred like that if you (and the camera!) had been in the room. We’ll never know, right?” In this quote, she mentions me as well as the camera and suggests that perhaps her day would have been different if I had been there. Given that the day was very traumatic for her (to be discussed later in this chapter), my presence could have been helpful, even protective.

In considering how protection may have been reciprocal, I don’t have access to the data that might reveal how Liz Turner protected me, but given that all my interactions with her staff were very positive, I imagine she said things about my project that enabled these positive reactions.

## **Mentoring**

In my graduate program, new students are assigned a mentor from the more experienced students. The mentor becomes the person who responds to e-mail questions prior to the recruitment weekend and then accompanies the new recruit to a dinner with the professors and a separate, less formal dinner with the other graduate students. The mentor continues to field questions throughout the summer and welcomes the new graduate student to campus in the fall. After that, the mentoring proceeds or not

depending on the individuals involved. Liz Turner was not my assigned mentee, but she adopted me as her mentor. I think she saw the research project as a chance to get a preview of what it is like to go through the later stages of our program—defending the prospectus, writing an IRB proposal, conducting research, and analyzing data. I took my role as adopted mentor seriously, searching for and buying Liz a book about graduate school, talking about the challenges of conducting research, answering questions, and actively seeking ways for us to work professionally, such as writing conference proposals together and delivering papers together. We drove to the National Council for Teachers of English Conference together, which gave us lots of time to talk. On the drive back from the conference, we took turns reading our current paper drafts for one of our graduate courses to each other and giving feedback. At my annual meeting with my advisors, they thanked me for mentoring Liz Turner.

Liz mentored me, too. By sharing information about being a woman of color who grew up in a dangerous urban environment, she gave me a closer view of African American culture. Having grown up and taught in a school district with 1% African American students, I didn't have much first-hand experience with African American students. In kind and indirect ways, Liz Turner helped me get to know her students better and think about ways to work more effectively with them. As Liz has worked her way through to candidacy in our program, she has mentored me about different ways to set up a research project and apply theory, as well as about how to negotiate philosophical differences with one's professors. As time went on, our relationship became more equal in terms of mentoring.

In the next section, I'll consider the risks of friendship as method, and, after that, I'll enlarge on the potential benefits.

### ***Risks of friendship as method***

Problematizing friendship as method involves exploring (with a stance of openness) the potential risks. “Doing good qualitative research these days requires an engagement with both the ethical and the epistemological challenges of deliberately entering into relationships with other people to learn about them” (Tom & Herbert, 2002; 591), and when these relationships turn into friendships, there is the potential for greater richness in the data but they are also more complicated “ethical and epistemological challenges.” There are ethical and epistemological challenges in all of these potential risks: change of context or blurred distinction between researcher and researched, exploitation, vulnerability (possible betrayal), breaches of confidentiality, and even premature termination of the project due to friendship problems.

One risk of friendship as method arises from the change in context between the collecting of the data and the presenting of the data. This problem is particularly acute when one is operating with a blurred distinction between researcher and researched. As Christman (1988) points out, “A woman gave her story to me in an act of friendship over tea at the kitchen table. While she set boundaries around what she was prepared to tell in that story, I still took it away from the kitchen table and set it in a context that served my research purposes” (78). I worried that many of the things Liz Turner talked about with me did arise out of our friendship and were not meant for the research context. It takes intuition and a nearly constant examining and re-examining of ethics to decide whether or not to include data that perhaps would be hurtful to a friend when taken out of context. In

the everyday flow of conversation between friends, self-editing is not a natural move. However, in data analysis, there are multiple opportunities to do so. Some data is obviously easy to exclude, such as Liz's comments about our mutual professors, who constitute an audience for this writing. Including such comments might be uncomfortable to her or even have undesired consequences. For that reason (and also to improve validity through member-checking), I frequently checked my interpretations of the data with Liz Turner, listening carefully to her responses. In my particular study, the risk of changing contexts was somewhat ameliorated by Liz's own agency in using the same data sets to write her own interpretation of the data. She wrote a conference paper, a seminar paper, and a departmental exam using the data from this project, all of which she generously shared with me and allowed me to use as additional data. This gave me a chance to see her view as a researcher in her own right, and it ameliorated somewhat the change in context from school to university because Liz was also a part of the university setting.

As a critical researcher, I was always conscious of the potential danger of exploitation. What if my portrayal of Liz Turner perpetuated stereotypes of African American women? "Findings may distort women's experience; they may inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes; they may be used by others in ways that continue to subordinate women" (Christman, 1988; 78). And just as there are risks for gender, so are there risks for race—perpetuating stereotypes and oppression. My fear of perpetuating stereotypes was not an imagined one. Liz wrote, "I found that some professors and colleagues had the tendency to make assumptions about me—even when they were not trying to do so. One assumption that seemed to be prevalent was that if a person like me worked outside of the university during their induction year of the Ph.D. program, they would not be as

successful. I strongly disagreed with—and resented—the subtle pressure that I felt to drop my position at the high school –AND—my identity as a classroom teacher—before I was ready.” Liz reveals she is struggling with racial assumptions, as well as an epistemological difference between the academy and school culture. In choosing the language to discuss this example, I am caught on the very epistemological challenge I wish to represent: do I start out my example saying, “In being with Liz . . .” or “In observing Liz . . .”? The first represents my stance as a friend in the classroom and the latter my stance as a researcher. In being with Liz, I could see how she considered her experience in the classroom a valuable component of the kind of doctoral experience she wished to have. In observing Liz, I might report something different or even *not* address her balancing act between two worlds with two very different systems of thought. In defending her decision to continue to work in the school system while pursuing her graduate studies, Liz also had to deal with “confronting stereotypes of African Americans as being lazy and unwilling to work hard.” From my stance as researcher/friend, I could see that Liz was working much harder than other graduate students, so I was petrified of unintentionally perpetuating stereotypes, not to mention contributing to the assumptions made about her.

So far, I have just been addressing the component of exploitation dealing with unfair treatment, such as stereotyping and oppression, but there is also a component of exploitation that has to do with researching for personal gain. If a participant views a friendship that has arisen at a research site as unconnected to the personal gain of the researcher, and then that view is disturbed, it is quite likely that the participant/friend could feel exploited. Specific conditions, such as isolation, in the lives of teachers and

researchers contribute to the potential for feelings of exploitation and actual exploitation. It may seem odd to use the word “isolation” to describe someone who spends her or his entire working day with other people, but what I mean is the isolation from colleagues. It is not unusual for teachers to go for weeks without being able to have so much as a fragment of a conversation with the colleague teaching next door. And the particular challenges of teaching—differentiating lesson plans for a variety of learners, adjusting to changes in curriculum, creatively managing a classroom and constantly seeking new ways to engage students, dealing with high-stakes testing pressure, negotiating relationships with parents, etc.—all contribute to the strong desire to discuss professional concerns with those who can understand them. Enter the researcher who most likely is an accomplished teacher, too. It may seem as if all this researcher wants to do is talk to the teacher about classroom topics, and, in many cases, the very issues that matter most to the teacher. It can be intoxicating for an isolated teacher to have that kind of attention. The relief from isolation can be so intense that the teacher and researcher may find themselves very quickly growing emotionally close. In such a situation, both researcher and teacher are vulnerable to the risks of exploitation. When the research project comes to an end, the teacher may feel that the researcher has used a friendship for personal gain, and the sudden withdrawal of attention can feel very much like abandonment. “Friendship as method . . . comes with a new set of obligations that do not pave a smooth, comfortable road. When we engage others’ humanity, struggles, and oppression, we cannot simply shut off the recorder, turn our backs, and exit the field” (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; 743). The researcher, too, is vulnerable—the research project can be exploited by the teacher to fulfill the teacher’s personal/emotional needs, and then he or she could choose to

withdraw consent, thereby abandoning the researcher and his or her project. This could feel emotionally betraying to the researcher, and also practically rob the researcher of a huge investment in time and effort.

To sum up, risks in friendship as method occur for both the researcher and the researched, and some of these risks have to do with the blurred distinction between researcher and researched: exploitation, vulnerability, and even betrayal. But there are risks for the research project as well. For example, there could even be premature termination of the project due to friendship problems. Perhaps an even larger consideration for the research project is the possibility that the friendship becomes more important than the project. A researcher may tend to interpret the data more positively in order to protect her friend. I frequently reflected on whether I might be doing this.

### ***Breaches of confidentiality: a risk of friendship as method***

With friendship as method, confidentiality is of particular concern. An incident early in my research project illustrates this risk clearly. Tillman-Healy presents a model of friendship filled with positive values, but realistic friendships are not so rosy. Friendships can be strained, sometimes beyond the breaking point. Unintentionally, I tested the friendship between Liz and myself very early in the project through a breach of confidentiality. Confidentiality is particularly difficult to maintain in qualitative research (Hoonard, 2003) and some of the conditions that make it difficult are the state of university offices—non-locking cabinets, or, in my case, sharing an office with other graduate students. In fact, I was in my graduate office finishing grading Liz Turner's students' essays when another graduate student asked me what I was doing, and I told her. The graduate student then began to challenge my ethics. Should I really be grading

papers for my research subject? Did her students know I was grading papers? I became very alarmed about these questions, and went to talk with two members of my committee who had helped me through the process of writing my prospectus and IRB. I was sure they could give me some help with this ethical dilemma. After talking with them, I sent the following e-mail message to Liz Turner:

Date: Mon, 23 January 2006  
From: [ksassi@umich.edu](mailto:ksassi@umich.edu)  
To: Liz Turner  
Subject: Papers

Hi, Liz,  
I need to talk with you about what you plan to tell students about their paper grades. [Name deleted—another graduate student] pointed out that there could be a potential ethical problem with the participants being graded by the researcher. I talked with both [names deleted—my advisors] about it. [One advisor's] feeling was that the students should not be told. [The other advisor] thought they should be told that you made the final decision on the grades. It's a muddy area, so I'd feel better if we could chat about it. I'm in my office now XXX-XXXX, then I'll be in class from 1-4, then I'll be at home this evening XXX-XXXX. I think I will get a cell phone soon so I'm easier to reach!

Kelly

Liz Turner quickly responded to my message with this message of her own:

Date: Mon, 23 January 2006  
From: Liz Turner  
To: [ksassi@umich.edu](mailto:ksassi@umich.edu)  
Subject: Papers

Oh, dear. We definitely need to talk. Please give me a call at home this evening, XXX-XXXX. I am now extremely concerned about a number of things.

Liz Turner

As soon as I read “extremely concerned” I knew there was a problem. After thinking about it for a moment, I realized I had made a rookie researcher mistake—I had violated

my subject's anonymity. I felt terrible about it, and made the phone call to Liz Turner with an attitude of contrition. I did not record the phone call as a source of data because my sole aim was to apologize to my friend and listen carefully to her point of view on why my actions made her "extremely concerned." Also, I fully expected her to end the project right then and there. I had violated her trust and also the conditions of the IRB about protecting her identity. I looked back at the consent form she had signed and cringed. I had written "a pseudonym will be assigned to you. Therefore, neither your name nor your image will be publicly revealed" (See Appendix 8). I had also written the following:

These efforts are to protect your privacy, which is subject to minimal risk during this research study. Although risk is minimal, it is possible that people in our joint program or professors may find out your identity, and this poses a slight risk to you because they might find out things about your teaching or classroom that you would prefer to remain confidential. For example, my major professor (name deleted) is aware of your identity because she is the one who recommended that I contact you and she will be reading drafts of my research.

While my consent letter had raised the possibility of precisely the kind of risk I had just subjected her to, I was angry with myself for not having been more careful to protect her from this risk. I should not have been handling her student papers in a joint office, and when asked about them, I should have deflected the question. I also should have talked with Liz first before talking with my advisors, who are also her advisors.

If I had taken a more distant researcher stance in relation to Liz, the risk would have been less for me. As it was, I had doubled the enormity of my mistake because not only had I, as a researcher, put her at risk, but I had also violated her trust in me as a friend. Furthermore, because she was a colleague, my betrayal resonated even on a third level because our common advisors were aware of my mistake. I learned, as did Herbert

and Tom, “how easy it is to unintentionally harm people we wish to learn from and listen to when we misunderstand them” (2002; 599).

The saving grace in this situation was my concerted effort to listen deeply and Liz’s acceptance of this effort. I learned specific things in our conversation about why my actions made Liz vulnerable. Taking a listening stance was crucial in coming to that understanding. Gaining insight into how people make meaning in the world is a benefit of listening (Johnston, 2006). Native scholars also advocate listening as a methodological approach (Swisher, 1998). She graciously accepted my apology, and our work continued, though it took us time to regain the closeness with which we had started the project. It was a useful lesson for me in terms of understanding ethics in research. I proceeded more cautiously as a result, heeding the admonition below:

Friendship as method requires that ethics remain at the forefront of our research and our research relationships. Confidentiality and informed consent become ongoing negotiations. Researchers and participants reflexively consider and discuss power dynamics at every turn and constantly strive to balance the need to advance the social justice agenda of their projects and the need to protect one another from harm. (Tillmann-Healy, 2003; 745)

In talking with Liz about this incident during the writing stage, she claimed she “forgot” about it, and encouraged me to allow myself to make mistakes and to forgive myself. The comfort those words bestowed on me attest to her big heart and also the potential understanding and growth available through a friendship as method approach, even amidst great risks.

To sum up, a friendship as method approach is potentially more problematic and risky than other approaches, as this example illustrates. One possibility for mitigating

those risks is listening. I'll discuss the role of listening in more depth near the end of this chapter, but first, another test of friendship.

### ***Another test of friendship: The powder keg day***

Another test of our friendship occurred after what became known as the “powder keg” day, on Friday, March 24, the fourth day of the Wynema Unit. I have already analyzed this day in terms of authority, but there is more to be said about how friendship was a factor in what happened after this day. I was in Chicago for the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and I had made arrangements (or so I thought) for my husband to come in and videotape the class. On Saturday, I sent the following e-mail message to Liz:

1                   Date: Sat., 25 March 2006  
2                   From: [Kelly Sassi](#)  
3                   To: Liz Turner  
4                   Subject: How were Thurs. and Fri.?  
5  
6                   Hi, Liz,  
7                   How are you doing? How did things go on Thursday and Friday?  
8                   Shall we talk on Sunday about Monday? I have a discourse  
9                   analysis project due Sunday at 5pm, so I'm limited on how much I  
10                  can help with planning this week. I can do more the following  
11                  week.  
12                  —  
13                  Kelly

1  
It always feels a bit odd to analyze one's own discourse, but what I notice is that I first ask how Liz is doing. After working together this long, I am beginning to feel close to her and naturally write with the orientation of a friend. Next, I ask about the days I missed because of the conference. I remember feeling anxious about missing her classes so early in the Wynema unit. My next question assumes that we will be talking about the lesson for Monday. We have grown into the habit of doing some planning jointly, hence my

assumption. At the same time, I was feeling a lot of stress because of my paper deadline when I wrote this message, which I let Liz know about in the fourth line. I also let her know I wouldn't be able to be as helpful that week as I had been in the past. Perhaps out of a sense of guilt—I missed her class, and I also couldn't help with planning as much for the coming week—I signal that I would try to make it up to her by putting in more effort the following week. The message is short, has a tone of familiarity, informality, and a kind of brevity that I use with people close to me, secure that they won't read anything unfriendly into the curtness of my message. I was not at all prepared for the message I received in return. The entire message appears in Chapter Three and is analyzed through the theoretical frame of authority, but here, I want to consider it through the frame of friendship.

Obviously, there is a lot going on in the message Liz writes me about the “powder keg” day, and because of the tension, it deserves close attention. Some of the layers I'll explore below are friendship, pedagogy (including curriculum and classroom management), school context, and race.

In the opening (ll. 7-8) and closing (l.100), Liz observes conventions of friendship, expressing hope my trip to Chicago “went well,” understanding about my unavailability to do as much planning as usual, saying “That's quite all right.” In the closing she wishes me “all best.” She also refers to me as a friend on line 68.

The next section (ll.10-18) communicates the basics of the lessons—there was a substitute teacher on Thursday during which time students “finished up lit. terms and did in-class reading”; on Friday students wrote about a memorable passage, then the class read the introduction to *Wynema* aloud, pausing to discuss the language choices of the

editor, LaVonne Brown Ruoff. Liz Turner says she based the lesson on a combination of “techniques . . . learned from both [university professors]” (l.15). Citing the university professors when her own training and experience would be sufficient bolsters her authority in choosing this lesson rather than having students present their background reports as planned.

Besides explaining the lesson, Liz also provides background on classroom management issues she is facing during the class period. Line 20 is where the conflict is introduced. Liz Turner describes the discussion in class as a “powder keg.” The remainder of the paragraph—through line 26— and the following paragraph (ll. 28-31) detail the events leading up to the main problem: described as the “real hot potato” on line 33. Before moving on to the main problem, it is important to dwell on these two paragraphs because although race is not mentioned explicitly, this is where I began to think about how race might be a factor in the conflict. All of the students mentioned in lines 28-31 are African American girls. Ashae reveals in class that she had been “threatened” at lunch. This sounds serious, though Liz, who knows her students well, dismisses it as a “playground” issue. What transpired after this revelation must have been difficult to manage because Liz Turner sends two students to the Media Center, something I had never seen her do. It is interesting that Liz names the students and connects each with previous bad behavior: Keanna skips class, and Tasleem was “mouthy” when an administrator observed class. Furthermore, this particular class was disrupted further five minutes before the bell when Tasleem “slammed and out of the class, angry.” There is more background near the end of the letter. In lines 78-80, she writes about how Ratsa, a Mexican-American girl, gave her a letter expressing her

discontent with the class up until this point. These situations would be challenging to manage by themselves, but they encompassed an even more challenging episode of resistance by students.

Now that I've analyzed some of the classroom management issues present on that day and some of the tensions surrounding race in the larger school environment, I'll turn to the central conflict.

When Liz Turner explains, "To be honest, I felt as if I had been oppressed and that the pain and suffering of my own ancestors had been slapped into my face by students I am supposed to be mentoring and teaching" (ll. 74-76), one feels the depth of her suffering in this classroom exchange. Her reaction, to quit teaching the book, also speaks to how traumatic this day has been. Furthermore, she needed long talks with a colleague and a friend, "to take the sting out of their remarks" (l. 73). But the hurt is still there because she asks "not to speak about this or be asked specific questions until Monday, since it took eight hours," the "it" being the time to calm down after that class period (ll. 93-94). Liz assesses this as a "BAD way to begin a unit" (l. 54) and "refuses to teach another lesson like this" (l. 67).

As a researcher and friend, I had my own set of emotions in response to this message, especially the part detailed above. First and foremost, I felt horrible that Liz had had such a bad experience. In addition, I saw that it was quite possible I would need to find another research project for my dissertation. I also felt challenged to think of a way to solve the problem of the conflict in class that Liz had laid out. While I couldn't talk with Liz about it right away, I saw that she had left several doors open to me. For example, she did end with "See you Monday," so I see it might be possible to return to

her classroom. Second, she uses first person plural in this line: “If we are encountering this kind of resistance in the classroom **before** we begin the unit, Kelly, I think we **must** have the privilege walk and perhaps a mini-lesson on Peggy McIntosh’s article . . . before we begin the book” (ll. 64-67). With these entrees in mind, I crafted the following reply:

1           Dear Liz,  
2           Thanks for your long message. I really appreciate you taking the time to  
3           tell me about your traumatic Friday. I am so sorry the "powder keg," as  
4           you so aptly called it, exploded. Obviously, we need to talk, but I want to  
5           honor your request for time to reflect and renew. One thought I had is that  
6           we might ask the head of [a multicultural organization] to come in and  
7           lead the privilege exercise to take the pressure off us. What do you think?  
8           My kids get on the bus at 8:55 tomorrow, and I am free after that to do  
9           anything you need doing. My qual class is 1-4, but then I have until 5:30  
10          when the kids get home. Let me know what you need—photocopies,  
11          coffee, solace, lesson-planning, anything. I'll plan to be in 3rd period to  
12          videotape and from a research perspective, it may be useful to interview  
13          some of the kids informally about their perceptions of Friday's discussion.  
14          I will wait to see what you think, though.  
15  
16          Also, ultimately, you are more important to me than this research project,  
17          so if at any point, you want to call it off, I respect your decision.  
18  
19          Kelly

It was difficult for me to write the last line, but it was also deeply heartfelt. By this point, I was immersed in the friendship as method approach to the degree described by Tillman-Healy: “. . .It is a level of investment in participants’ lives that puts fieldwork relationships on par with the project” (2003; 735). This can be seen in my last paragraph where I write explicitly that our friendship is more important than the project. Furthermore, in following my critical pedagogy frame, I certainly would not want the teacher to pursue teaching a book that resulted in her feeling oppressed. Although the anger that had erupted in her classroom has been documented to occur when teachers take up NA/AI literatures and would provide a relevant focal point for my research, my

theoretical and methodological approaches mandated that I not pressure the teacher to continue if she wanted to end the project. In the end, the teacher did continue with the unit and the research project. Perhaps the greatest justification for the friendship as method approach is revealed in a line from her e-mail message about the “powder keg” day—“if you weren’t researching me and a friend.” That is, without the support of friendship, taking on the difficult topics of race, slavery, and genocide, may feel like too much in an already tense high school classroom.

This is not to imply that friendship can salvage any problem that surfaces in a research project. To the contrary, pursuing friendship as method has many inherent risks, some of which I have discussed here. In the methodology chapter, I made an argument for using critical discourse analysis to study how an African American teacher uses critical pedagogy strategies to teach a work of Native American literature (*Wynema*) to predominantly white students. To be consistent with the social justice vision on which critical pedagogy is grounded, it is appropriate to take a critical view of my research approach as well, especially my use of friendship as method. By stepping out of the formal conventions of a more distant researcher/researched relationship, both the researcher and the participants are vulnerable because of the personal information they have revealed through friendship. When the context changes from an intimate context between friends to a formal paper or professional conference presentation, a participant could feel as if her trust has been betrayed. For example, I used an example about Liz Turner’s hair in an earlier draft to illustrate my ignorance about African Americans. When she read it in the paper, it struck her as an odd and unimportant example. What she barely remembered from one of our casual conversation had meant something different to

me, something that belonged in my dissertation. However, because of her response, I decided to take it out. Besides changes in context, breaches of confidentiality are also an issue. In dropping the formality of the more traditional relationship between researcher and researched, it is possible that standards of confidentiality could be inadvertently lowered. Exploitation is always an issue in relationships between the researcher and the researched. However, in a friendship, when there is a blurred distinction between the roles of researched/researcher and interactions are on a more equal footing characteristic of friends, when there is a shift to doing the more academic work like publishing a paper, it can seem like exploitation—why does one friend get to publish and one does not? If disagreements over any of these issues arise, it is possible that the research project will be lost, and even more disturbing, that a friendship could be lost.

### ***The rhetoric of listening***

Given the potential benefits of friendship as method—access to different kinds of data, a deeper level of understanding of participants in the study, collaboration in social justice, personal growth—it is worth considering ways to mitigate the potential risks. While listening is a perhaps assumed and even prosaic aspect of friendship, a particular kind of listening—rhetorical listening—can be powerful in mitigating the risks of friendship. Rhetorical listening’s “stance of openness” and function as “a trope for interpretive invention” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 25) make it particularly applicable here. Interpretive invention is a combination of hermeneutics’ interpretation and rhetoric studies’ invention—a combination of the meaning-making of each field. Therefore, the interpretive invention of rhetorical listening particularly serves the work of the qualitative researcher—the movement between analyzing data and making meaning from that

analysis. For example, when I listened deeply to this line in Liz's e-mail message after the powder keg day: "If you weren't researching me and a friend, I'm sure I would shift to another book." I eventually heard how important it was to be positioned as her friend. This led me to consider friendship as a code in analyzing further data, which led to the discovery of multiple references to friendship, which led to the formulation of new research questions and more analysis, and so on.

Rhetorical listening's definition as a "code of cross-cultural conduct" (Ratcliffe, 2005; 25) makes it useful for understanding the kind of listening necessary for Liz Turner and me to develop and maintain a friendship through the challenges of trust, vulnerability, breaches of confidentiality, and racial tension in the classroom. Another important quality of rhetorical listening for this particular project is a stance of openness. Taking a stance of openness helps us to hear better than is otherwise possible. Openness is important in cross-cultural communication, and openness should extend to considering that listening is raced. As Nikki Giovannis asserts, "listening is not as necessary in U.S. culture for white people as it is for nonwhites" (as cited in Ratcliffe 2005; 21). To recover listening from these associations, Ratcliffe posits four moves of rhetorical listening:

- 1) Promoting and understanding of self and other;
- 2) Proceeding within an accountability logic;
- 3) Locating identifications across commonalities and differences;
- 4) Analyzing claims as well as the cultural logics within which these claims function. (2005; 26)

The first move is especially relevant to my project, which is concerned with facilitating deeper student understanding of NA/AI literatures. Understanding is conceptualized as "standing under" or "consciously standing under discourses that surround us and others while consciously acknowledging all our particular—and very fluid—standpoints.

Standing under discourses means letting discourses wash over, through, and around us, and then letting them lie there to inform our politics and ethics.” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 28).

This move of understanding self and other was made on several levels—Liz Turner encouraged students to engage in understanding themselves through the reflective writing they did throughout the NA/AI unit. Students were also supported in their efforts to understand Native American people and also people different from themselves in the classroom. On another level, both Liz and I were pushing our own understanding of NA/AI literatures, people, and pedagogy, as well as our understanding of ourselves.

The second move, a logic of accountability, is also relevant to this research project because it “invites us to consider how all of us are, at present, culturally implicated in effects of the past (via our resulting privileges and/or their lack) and, thus, accountable for what we do about situations now, even if we are not responsible for their origins” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 32). At a moment of peak tension during the research project, Liz Turner found it essential for her students to examine their privilege, and the resulting classroom activity (the privilege walk) showed that students were engaged in rhetorical listening.

The third move in rhetorical listening, that of “locating identifications across commonalities and differences” is a move I made earlier in this chapter in comparing the multiple identities of Liz Turner and myself. Students also engaged in this move when they compared their school experiences with the boarding school experiences of Zitkala-Sa (Zitkala-Sa, 2003). The fourth move is “analyzing claims as well as the cultural logics within which claims function.” These moves can be made using three tactics: listening metonymically, eavesdropping, and listening pedagogically. *“Listening metonymically*

signifies the rhetorical-listening moves that listeners may make in public discussion when identifying a text or person with a cultural group; specifically, this tactic invites listeners to assume that a text or person is associated with—but not necessarily representative of—an entire cultural group” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 78). This tactic of rhetorical listening can help prevent stereotyping, but if stereotyping happens, and “participants tell us/ we are wrong or hurtful in our portrayals of their lives and experiences, we have to listen, and we have to listen for as long as it takes to hear the story correctly” (Tom & Herbert, 2002; 599-600). It is this kind of commitment I had to make when admitting to Liz Turner that I had breached the confidentiality of our research relationship (and risked our friendship).

Listening is not only a natural component of the everyday conversation that friends engage in; it is also a theoretical construct. Shultz (2003) conceives of listening as a critical enterprise, one that can move teachers toward transformative and more democratic practices. For her, listening closely “implies becoming deeply engaged in understanding what a person has to say through words, gesture, and action. Listening is fundamentally about being in relationship to another and through this relationship supporting change or transformation” (Schultz, 2003; 9). Transformation is more likely to occur when friendship develops between people of different social groups, such as the one between Liz Turner and myself. For Schultz, the development of a relationship with this kind of potential involves a particular kind of listening. She argues that it is the “responsibility of teachers to create the conditions for students to give words to their perspectives and understandings so that their teachers can respectfully teach them” (2003; 11). Similarly, I argue it is the responsibility of researchers to create these same kinds of conditions for their research subjects through purposeful listening. Schultz defines

listening as an “active, relational, and interpretive process that is focused on making meaning” (2003; 8). This definition describes my research orientation well.

Researching with an action-researcher approach in a classroom involves developing multiple relationships, so listening skills are important. Furthermore, when one is involved with a project that involves cross-cultural issues, such as the teaching of NA/AI literatures and dealing with racial tensions in a classroom and school as this project does, rhetorical listening offers several tactics for increasing the probability of understanding the complex communication one has access to. Showing one’s understanding helps maintain that access and even increase it, a circle of action that is dynamic and potentially transformative for researcher and participants.

### ***The unfinished nature of friendship as method***

On the last day of discussion during the Wynema unit, the class had left, but the video was still running, and the following exchange between Liz Turner and me occurs:

LT: Thanks so much for healing my class because I feel like this class is going to never be the same after this.

KS: Did you say for “healing” your class?

LT: Yes. I think that you really healed. This unit was very healing.

KS: Wow.

LT: I just really do. I’m not just pulling your leg or just... I really think that this class, though they’ve been very, very difficult, especially coming towards the end of the year, have you know, this, we \_\_\_\_\_ not taken place. So I just really want to thank you.

KS: Well, I want to thank *you* because the way that you have gone about all of this has just been amazing to me. And I think it’s very interesting that while we’re in a Native American unit, there’s so much talk about African Americans, which is where the main tension is in this school, from what I’ve been hearing and observing.

LT: Yes.

KS: And so it’s almost like=

LT: =having that third=

KS: =Students are able to like work stuff out through the Native American that pertains to what the tension is in their lives. I don't know. I may be reading too much into it.

LT: I think that's very true.

I like the idea of ending with this quote because it gives a sense of an ending, an important structural feature to any story, which this has been. To end here would be to say that although there have been tests of friendship during the research project, friendship prevailed and the class was "healed." However, to do so, to end here, is disingenuous because, while the story seems to have ended, it has not. Both research projects and friendships are alive and dynamic; they continually change, and so could the ending of the story. It is possible that something I have written in this latest draft goes too far, is offensive to my friend, and she could become angry. Although I gave her the last chapter and she said it "checks out," it could be that when she reads this one, she will disagree. Friends disagree, but what is the level of disagreement a friendship can hold? These are all unknowns. "With friendship as method, a project's issues emerge organically, in the ebb and flow of everyday life . . . The unfolding path of the relationships becomes the path of the project" (Tillman-Healy, 2003; 735). And as the path of a friendship continues, so does the project. Liz Turner and I continue to have conversations, listen rhetorically, and share writing about the project that continually helps me to see the work from new perspectives. In fact, between the time I defended this dissertation and the time I revised it, Liz Turner revealed that she planned to return to Rainfield High School as a researcher. Knowing this, I asked her if she wished to delete anything from the powder keg e-mail about race tensions at the school, and this was her reply:

I don't wish to redact anything from this message. To do so would be to falsify

the racially charged context of that semester, which was a key factor in teaching and learning. The data from my current dissertation project showed that while the racial tension at this site has abated somewhat, it is still something that this community struggles with and seeks to think through. It's also important that this message is one that I have returned to in my own work. The experience of teaching the Wynema unit was critical in my own development as a teacher and a researcher. The powder keg day led to the formation of my research question: "How do inservice high school English teachers talk about classroom conflicts in a discourse study group?" Without that day, and the reflection and self-revelation inherent in that message, I'm not sure that I would have wanted to conduct further qualitative research at the school. (personal communication, May 12, 2008)

To return to Hayano's perspective that the relationship between researcher/researched is a continuum, it is not the scientific detachment of the researcher as complete stranger that ensures validity, but knowledge of where one is along as many dimensions of that continuum as possible. Since I first entered Liz Turner's classroom when she was a first-year graduate student, she has changed, giving up her public school classroom work, passing her program exams, and taking several courses. As she has acquired research skills, her interest in analyzing data from this project has increased, and she has written about it in increasingly academic terms. Her writing is a manifestation of "catalytic validity," the degree to which the research empowers those researched (Patti Lather 1991; Peter Reason, 1994). Her agency in taking up this data to do her own academic work also has come to represent, for me, a measure of my success.

Despite this example of success in taking a friendship as methodology approach, I want to emphasize that doing so is complicated and risky. Most of us never read a handbook on how to be a friend; it is something we learned intuitively, socially, and *culturally*. That is, there are cultural conventions to friendship. In my Nordic-American culture, silence and stoicism are characteristic of friendship. A good friend is someone with whom we can comfortably be in silence. For Liz Turner, silence has negative

connotations—keeping up a stream of conversation is a convention of friendship. So, one of the risks of friendship as method is that the researcher/researched may have to negotiate the cross-cultural conventions of friendship.

In taking up friendship as method, there are particular qualities of friendship that have been theorized in the literature: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, vulnerability, and hope and justice. To these qualities, I have added protection, helping, and mentoring, which were a part of the friendship developed through this research project. Although these qualities may span across cultures, some, like giving, are culturally specific, so they must be undertaken with care when engaging as friendship as part of research methodology. Because of the overall positive connotations of these qualities of friendship, there is a tendency to view friendship as method positively, but each of these qualities has a potentially negative side as well.

Some of the risks inherent in a friendship-as-method approach include vulnerability. Both the researcher and researched make themselves vulnerable in a friendship. But because of the imbalance in power between researched and researcher, there is a greater potential for the researched to be exploited and even colonized by the research project. While blurring the distinction between researcher/researched would seem to offset this tendency by putting both on a more equal plane, as friendships often do, the potential problems emerge when the context changes. Things that felt comfortable to share in a friendly conversation may feel quite different when they appear in a publication that clearly benefits one party more than the other. Confidentiality is also a risk, in all research projects, but more so in a project which includes friendship as methodology. By stepping away from the formal protocols that govern a traditional

researched/researcher relationship, a breach of confidentiality may be more likely to occur. Another risk has to do with protection and helping. If the researched becomes accustomed to the help and protection of the researcher, she may feel betrayed when they are not available. Liz Turner alluded to this when she wrote me the e-mail about the “powder keg” day. If a friendship method has been established, what happens when the research project ends? It is possible that the researched could feel abandoned. Finally, when a research relationship is operating on the basis of friendship (rather than a distanced professional basis) and there are problems with the friendship, the research project is at risk. Researchers have to decide if the potential for gaining richer insights is worth the risks of engaging in friendship as methodology.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

*“[I]magine, for a moment, a useable past in which Native people’s writings . . . aren’t just included but are, instead, critically important.” –Malea Powell*

This dissertation began with an exploration of the challenges teachers face in taking up Native American/American Indian (NA/AI) literatures, challenges of anger, confusion, resistance, and entrenched misconceptions about American Indians and other indigenous peoples. These challenges arise due to an “understanding gap” about NA/AI literatures that both non-Native students and teachers have. Recently, for example, a teacher told me he had experienced several outbursts from his students during Native American units, and on one occasion a student came to class with a T-shirt that read, “Custer had it right”<sup>46</sup> during a reading of Sherman Alexie’s work. These incidents of outright racism in the classroom are disturbing, but even without extreme incidents, the works still present challenges to teachers.

Liz Turner’s classroom followed a similar pattern in that students, specifically a group of white male students that Liz characterized as “privileged,” became confrontational on the first day of discussing the novel *Wynema*. The conflict in Liz Turner’s classroom, what she called the “powder keg” day, was complicated by a larger

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<sup>46</sup> American Indians protested ABC airing a series on Custer, naming him “the Adolph Eichmann of the nineteenth century” (Deloria, V. 1969).

context of black/white tensions. The Native American book was the lit match to the racial powder keg that she claimed already existed in her class. Liz Turner's first impulse was to blow out the match, that is, to quit teaching *Wynema* and "shift to another book." However, I think she recognized that the real problem was the underlying racial powder keg, and eliminating the reading of *Wynema* would not eliminate the larger problem. Matt Herman, an instructor at Stone Tribal College, said in his presentation about anger in the Native American literature classroom: "If we choose not to teach the conflicts, the conflicts will teach us" (2005). Liz Turner chose to teach the conflict, which she characterized as an overabundance of white privilege, by inviting a facilitator to her classroom to engage the students in a privilege walk.

Courage is an accurate term for describing what was needed, especially considering the lack of pedagogical infrastructure for teaching NA/AI literatures. Like many secondary English teachers, Liz Turner taught in a school where NA/AI literatures were available (there were multiple class sets of *Waterlily* in the book room, though no one had ever used them) and included in the curriculum (Liz Turner's department head readily approved her teaching *Wynema*). Despite accessibility and acceptance, Liz Turner had never taught any NA/AI literature in her six years as a secondary teacher. This is not due to an aversion to teaching multicultural literatures on her part; Liz Turner is a competent multicultural teacher, well versed in the employment of culturally relevant pedagogy and the underlying power dynamics in schools that make culturally relevant pedagogy necessary. On a surface level, it was a lack of time that kept Liz from teaching *Ceremony* in her first year of teaching, but underneath that, it was a lack of pedagogical infrastructure—not having read NA/AI literatures in her own schooling, lack of training

to teach the works in her teacher education program, lack of resources to support her pedagogy, and a lack of cultural context.

The study of NA/AI literatures should be something that all students engage in during their education, but it should not just be a once-an-educational career or even a once-a-year event for them, as it may very well turn out be for the 21 students in Liz Turner's class who had never read a work by an American Indian or Alaska Native writer. Instead, NA/AI literatures should be integrated into the curriculum throughout grade levels. The gains the students in this class made in particular kinds of understanding—self-knowledge, empathy, and perspective—are an important part of their education. These gains in understanding would not have been likely to occur were it not for the culturally relevant approach Liz Turner took in teaching this unit.

Surprisingly, it was not just the culture of the Muskogee Creek author that needed to be focused on in this class—it was the races and cultures of the actual students in the classroom that required attention before the Native American study could take place, and this attention is a feature of culturally relevant pedagogy.

In the introduction to this dissertation, I laid out a vision of culturally relevant pedagogy that seemed to be a good fit for the particular issues surrounding the teaching of NA/AI literatures: holding high standards, valuing language, valuing community, enacting an ethic of caring, engaging students in social consciousness and critique, and reflecting critically on how all these characteristics function synergistically in the classroom. In addition, I proposed that culturally relevant pedagogy in the context of a NA/AI literatures unit should engage critical pedagogy more deeply and make red

pedagogy more central. In analyzing my data, which radiated<sup>47</sup> out from the moment of conflict on the “powder keg” day, I found that Liz Turner was practicing many strategies of culturally relevant pedagogy, and some were more prevalent than others in this project: her high standards, valuing community, and engaging students in social consciousness and critique. When students were resistant, especially to the latter tactic, Liz Turner showed a range of legitimacies upon which to base her authority, and the one that was most appropriate for the Wynema unit is the one that has not appeared in the literature until now: cultural legitimacy

Authority was explored in detail in Chapter Three: “Authority as a Potential Teacher Affordance in Bridging the Understand Gap of Non-Native Students” because authority was cited as a concern by Liz Turner multiple times, particularly in relation to two classes of peak conflict: the “powder keg” day and the “privilege walk” day. As I examined Liz Turner’s enactment of authority in Chapter Three, I found it to be complex and at times ambivalent—she alternately invoked and shared authority with students. During the semester she used an array of strategies to establish and maintain her authority, based on various kinds of legitimacy related to her multiple identities. Teaching from the footing of some of these identities—such as being female and African American when faced with the vocal opposition of privileged white males—made Liz Turner feel vulnerable in regard to her authority at times; at other times she used these identities to her advantage—such as when she used African American vernacular to

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<sup>47</sup> This radiating outward is similar to how Leslie Marmon Silko (1981) describes Pueblo structure: “For those of you accustomed to a structure that moves from Point A to Point B to Point C, this presentation may be somewhat difficult to follow because the structure of Pueblo expression resembles something like a spider web, with many little threads radiating from a center, criss-crossing each other. As with the web, the structure will emerge as it is made and you must simply listen and trust, as the Pueblo people do, that meaning will be made” (“Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Structure.” *English literature: Opening up the cannon*. Eds. L. Fiedler and H. Baker. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.)

engage some of her African American female students or referred to her American Indian background when discussing NA/AI issues. In these situations, Liz Turner was using these strategies of culturally relevant pedagogy: valuing language and valuing cultural communities. Furthermore, she did not set these strategies off from the rest of her work; they were integrated holistically into her professional practice, another characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy I noted in the introduction.

Perhaps it was because of her holistic approach that Liz was able to shift seamlessly between different kinds of legitimacy upon which to base her authority. Despite a lack of content knowledge about NA/AI literatures, she was still able to call upon expert professional legitimacy when Jeff challenged her on the first assignment (to read the introduction to the book). She rarely invoked rational legitimacy (“how dare you disagree with the teacher!”), except to practice the social consciousness and critique characteristic of culturally relevant pedagogy, as was the case when she challenged students to consider why information about Wounded Knee might be missing from an authoritative-appearing book about Indian wars. In that same situation she invoked cultural legitimacy to help the student bridge his understanding gap when she reminded him, “You know, as a young African-American man, that’s something you can probably relate to, and I can relate to, right?” In addition to professional, rational, and cultural legitimacies, Liz Turner also acted as a moral authority, another area where there is an overlap between authority and culturally relevant pedagogy. Women, especially women of color, more often invoke moral authority, as Liz Turner did when emotively guiding students in reacting to the imperialism of the U.S. with regard to American Indians. In emotively guiding students, Liz Turner exemplified a continuum of caring, from the

subject matter being studied to the students in her classroom, for whom she expressed a deep love and desire to protect during the risky privilege walk activity.

Culturally relevant pedagogy, especially the part concerned with social consciousness and critique, deals with power in classrooms as well as the larger society, seeking to disrupt hegemony and distribute power more equitably, and the way in which a teacher handles authority can affect her power. In the following example, we see Liz both negotiating authority with students and getting them to think about culture more critically, a move of a culturally relevant teacher.

Liz Turner used the concrete experiences of her students (and herself) to help students make meaning about cultural practices. As part of a lengthy discussion on cultural practice that occurred the week following the privilege walk, she encouraged a student to explain how the way students drink water at Pioneer is a cultural practice:

Student: Yeah, we run it a few minutes because when it sits in the pipes, it sucks up the aluminum in the pipe.

Liz Turner: That's one. Well, isn't that a cultural practice right there? See, somebody from Rainfield knows...No, you all don't think that your school is a culture. Listen, Rainfield's a culture that I was new to and you guys were new to this year as well. Only a Rainfield kid would know that you can't just drink water out of the fountain when it first comes up and just get that nasty stuff that sat in the pipe for a while. You know, after a while, the best ways to get in the school, when you drink water, when you should get food, when you should leave, when you should go to your locker, the best route to class... that's all cultural because it's all based on this culture here. My high school had a completely different culture.

By using an example that is a concrete part of Rainfield students' experience (although only one student explained the practice, there was a moment prior to this when several students were simultaneously blurting out something about the water at the school), Liz Turner has made the lesson "culturally relevant." She makes an interesting move here; by

characterizing their school as a culture, she makes visible what some students may not have seen before. White students, in particular, frequently deny having a culture. Liz Turner both acknowledges these students' disagreement and encourages them to think further when she says, "No, you all don't think that your school is a culture--Listen." After the discussion, Liz Turner had each student write down an American cultural practice on one side of a note card and a cultural practice of another group on the back of the card.

In the discussion that ensued, Liz Turner continued to guide students in meaning-making, a feature of culturally relevant pedagogy in which "knowledge emerges in dialectical relationships" (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 473). After students shared their cultural practices, Liz Turner shifted the discussion to the topic of civilization, with the goal of having students then determine which of the cultural practices they had listed were "civilized" and which were not. She first shared a definition of civilization as "culture that has a relatively high level of cultural development, specifically the stage of cultural development at which writing and the keeping of written records is attained" (videotape), then she asked whether students agreed or disagreed with this definition. Responding to the nonverbal responses of students, Liz Turner made the following comments:

Liz Turner: OK, Lyric vehemently disagrees. We're going to get to Lyric's point of view, then Ratsa's. Could you guys give me some insight? This is what Webster's Collegiate Dictionary says, so you disagree with the dictionary. Why? How dare you—just kidding.

Liz Turner reveals that the definition of civilization she has just given them is not her personal definition, but a dictionary definition, which could be seen as a kind of

authority. Her joke about Lyric disagreeing with the dictionary definition “How dare you—just kidding” shows her acknowledgement that he’s questioning authority, and she encourages students to do this, like the culturally responsive educator who “was careful to help students understand the difference between an intellectual challenge and a challenge to the authority of their parents” (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 482). In the discussion that follows, “rather than the voice of one authority, meaning is made as a product of dialogue between and among individuals” (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 473). Interestingly, it is Liz and her minority students who engage in this dialogic meaning-making; Lyric, an African American boy, referencing an earlier part of the discussion about technology, argues that civilization turned “out to be kind of technological and stuff like that.”

Liz Turner: OK, so civilization doesn’t have to be technological. It can have its own what?

Lyric: Like its own advancements.

Liz Turner: OK. It’s own advancements. OK. Ratsa?

Ratsa, an Hispanic American girl, corrects Liz Turner’s earlier pronouncement that her students haven’t had Western Civilization yet by saying “Well, I’m in Western Civ now and the definition of culture is a group of people or someone that’s technologically advanced, that has writing, basically more advanced than other groups...and there were five forms of civilization.” Liz Turner tries to name the five, then stops and says, “I can’t remember. I got a B in World History . . . it was just really, really boring. OK, So it was writing. It was monumental architecture...” Various students contribute other suggestions like communication and agriculture, then Liz Turner calls on Keanna (the African American girl who had spoken first on the privilege walk day).

Keanna: OK, What I think that a civilization is not only a country of

people, but they developed advances to move from a problem to something.

Liz Turner: This is good. So we have some alternate definitions. A country of people who develop advances to solve their problems. Like if you have a problem... shh... think about it. She is so correct. And you know, Keanna, that is so advanced because most people don't think about that until at least graduate school. Why do people develop civilizations? The only reason why writing developed in some places and not in others is because the places where it didn't develop they didn't need it as much. They had other solutions for that problem. They had other ways of storing records. They had somebody who could remember everything who had a real good memory.

The discussion concludes with Liz Turner having students vote by show of hands on whether they agree or disagree with the Webster's definition of "civilization." As she is counting hands, she says facetiously, "Oh, how dare you children disagree with the dictionary!" In the end, only two students agree with the dictionary definition. The meaning making—done mostly by the minority students in the class—has been more compelling than the dictionary definition.

This vignette, from one of the later classes in the Wynema Unit, illustrates several ideas from the dissertation as a whole—authority, spatial desegregation and discourse, friendship, and culturally relevant pedagogy. In terms of authority, this vignette shows Liz balancing sharing authority with students and asserting authority on a legal basis. She chides students for disagreeing with an authoritative source like the dictionary definition of culture, but does so in a joking manner that encourages students to do just the opposite—develop the skills of social critique. Hence, her making space in the discussion for Lyric's vehement disagreement. In terms of spatial desegregation and discourse, it is significant that this lesson occurred after the desegregation of classroom space took place. Two African American girls—Keanna and Tasleem—are sitting at the front of the

two rows of desks closest to the front of the room and the teacher, and they both participate in discussion, though Keanna participates significantly more than Tasleem. Liz Turner rewards Keanna's participation by complimenting her on her insight about culture: "She is so correct. And you know, Keanna, that is so advanced because most people don't think about that until at least graduate school."

In this vignette, Liz Turner is also doing the work of a culturally relevant teacher: raising students' consciousness about culture by seizing on the student example about running the water in the pipes at the school, emphasizing that it is an example of cultural practice and their school is a culture. This is especially important work for the white students in class who may think they do not have a culture.

In terms of friendship as methodology, which blurs distinctions between researcher and researched and leads to a more equal status, I should note that this vignette is an example of Liz Turner changing the unit plan I provided. The lesson is completely changed, bearing no resemblance to what I had given her, which shows her agency in guiding the unit. Liz seems to be confident and to enjoy teaching the class.

### ***A turn to culturally relevant research***

At the 2007 National Association of Multicultural Education conference in Baltimore, as I listened to Geneva Gay talk about her deepening understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy to include culturally relevant administration and culturally relevant management of school districts, it occurred to me that the moves she was making could also apply to research. By attaching the adjective "culturally relevant" to research, what changes? In terms of this project, engaging in culturally relevant research has meant following many of the same characteristics of culturally relevant pedagogy—holding

high standards, valuing language, valuing community, enacting an ethic of caring to include friendship, fostering social critique, and self reflection—but enacting them on different levels. Rhetorical listening is an especially important tool for culturally relevant research, and, as is the case with culturally relevant pedagogy, the individual qualities of culturally relevant research should be engaged synergistically.

Enactment of a culturally relevant research approach is especially important when it comes to a study of NA/AI literatures because of the historically negative reputation researchers have had among American Indians and other indigenous peoples. “The term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonization. The word itself, ‘research,’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (Smith, 1999; 1). According to Vine Deloria, “[S]urveillance and too much observation abrogates the narrative rights of tribal consciousness” (Vizenor, 1994; 178). To follow Deloria’s logic on the extreme damage of observation, “The fundamental thesis of the anthropologist is that people are objects for observation, people are then considered objects for experimentation, for manipulation, and for eventual extinction” (V. Deloria, 1969; 81). Given the damage done to indigenous people in the name of research, culturally relevant research, is an imperative.

My vision of culturally relevant research emerged from the particular challenges of this research project—helping non-Native students make some gains on their understanding gap, supporting a teacher who was experiencing conflict during the Native American unit, and finding a way to enact action research in meaningful ways. The features I believe should be a part of a culturally relevant research approach are holding high standards while valuing cultural strengths, valuing language and community,

enacting an ethic of caring to include friendship, fostering social consciousness and critique, and engaging in self-reflection.

### **Holding high standards while valuing cultural strengths**

In culturally relevant pedagogy, holding high standards means expecting all students to achieve. It means not lowering expectations as a “favor” to students, especially minority who may be struggling with an achievement gap. Valuing students’ home cultures is not done at the expense of holding high expectations for them. I think this translates to doing culturally relevant research as well. On one level, for the action researcher, taking a culturally relevant approach means upholding high standards for the students with whom one is working—in this case, not lowering expectations for non-Native students who may be struggling with an understanding gap when they read NA/AI literatures. I worked alongside Liz Turner to boost student achievement, especially of the five African American girls who were struggling in the class and a student who commuted from an alternative school. This is an example of bringing the same kind of ethos to the method of research that a culturally relevant teacher brings to her teaching.

On another level, it is necessary to hold high standards for oneself and also for the theorists on whose frameworks one depends. Over the course of the project, I moved from researching *about* race/culture in the classroom to researching *through* culture as a foundation for culturally relevant research. I’ve had to repeatedly re-imagine how NA/AI literatures can be taught and how the teaching of them can be researched as my understanding of culturally relevant work evolved. Just as Liz Turner wished to quit teaching *Wynema* when students became confrontational on the “powder keg” day, I

wanted to quit my research project when I realized I had revealed Liz Turner's identity to a colleague. I had to draw on one of my cultural strengths, "sisu,"<sup>48</sup> to persevere.

To support the aims of valuing cultural strengths, a culturally relevant researcher should look to the work of theorists working in the same cultural tradition as that of the classroom work being studied. For me, this means the inclusion of Native American/American Indian theorists, as well as more mainstream writers and those of other historically marginalized cultures, such as African American and Hispanic American researchers. A culturally relevant researcher, however, would not merely include, but would attempt to place Native theorists centrally when researching Native topics in the classroom, and not just because they are Native. Furthermore, she should attempt to discern the reputation of those theorists in relation to other American Indian intellectuals, not just in relation to mainstream thought. For example, I checked with NA/AI literature and rhetoric scholars on several of my sources to get a sense of how they are positioned and viewed in the larger field.

A subset of the aim of valuing cultural strengths is attention to the cultural orientation of research methods (Eisenhart 2001). Do the research methods support the perpetuation of ways of thinking that are damaging to the culture being studied? For example, do the research questions or choice of data perpetuate a deficit model of minority achievement? If so, then perhaps new questions or data should be considered. A culturally relevant researcher should consider the detrimental effects of past research and seek to avoid duplicating its detrimental practices.

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<sup>48</sup> A Finnish term that doesn't translate easily to English, but means something like inner strength, courage, and endurance.

## Valuing language and community

Just as culturally relevant teaching demands different pedagogical choices (as illustrated at the beginning of this chapter), so culturally relevant research suggests different methodological choices. Valuing a different language and community implies being able to step out of one's own language and culture, but this is difficult to do. Just as many teachers are "culturally encapsulated," (Irvine, 1992) so are researchers. Therefore, deliberately thinking about the cultural components of our work is imperative.

Given the lack of pedagogical infrastructure for teaching NA/AI literatures discussed in the introduction, it is not surprising that

[T]oo few teachers have been exposed during their teacher education programs to appropriate conceptualizations of teaching for students from groups that we as a society have marginalized and normalized. Few teachers have "stumbled on" (to borrow a notion from Highwater 1981: ix) adequate resolutions of the dilemmas they confront in cross-cultural or multiethnic teaching situations (Osborne, 1996; 286).

The same is true for researchers to some extent. There is a lack of explicit instruction for researchers in how to manage cross-cultural dilemmas in research. The methods that are appropriate for these kinds of dilemmas, such as critical discourse analysis, tend to be segmented off from other methods. That is, just as NA/AI literatures tend to be set off and marginalized from mainstream literatures, the research methods appropriate for studying the teaching of NA/AI literatures are also set off. I argue that methods for cross-cultural research should have a more central place. After all, classrooms in the United State are increasingly multicultural.

Just as it is important to help "prospective teachers understand culture (their own and that of others) and the ways it functions in education" (Ladson-Billings, 1995; 483),

so is it important for researchers. For the teacher in an English classroom, this could mean reading the literatures of cultures underrepresented in the curriculum. For the culturally relevant researcher, it could mean studying the teaching of such literatures, the achievement of these groups, or the learning process for teachers working with languages and communities different from their own. To gain an understanding of the larger cultural context, researchers may need to spend time outside the classroom, just being in communities, practicing “deep hanging out” (Grande, 2004). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) advocates a similar strategy specifically for her context (New Zealand) in *Decolonizing Methodologies*: “the strategy of ‘personal development’ whereby the researchers prepare themselves by learning Maori language, attending *hui* and becoming more knowledgeable about Maori concerns” (177).

In valuing language and community as part of a culturally relevant research approach, researchers must look to the people they are studying for guidance on how this “valuing” should be carried out. And indigenous people are ably stepping into this role. In a 2008 AERA panel titled, “Red Theory, Red Praxis: Indigenous Research and Possibility,” Cornell professor Troy Richardson pointed to many tribes’ deliberate and agentic use of non-Native researchers for their projects to help them “bend” institutions to indigenous ways of thinking and researching.

### **Enacting an ethic of caring, including friendship**

Given my research experiences for this dissertation, I believe an ethic of caring should be part of culturally relevant research as well as culturally relevant pedagogy. In Chapter Five, I show how caring can be a significant part of a “friendship as method”

approach “through the experience of empathic connection with the friend/researcher, which can help participants feel heard, known, and understood” (Tillman-Healy, 2003; 737). I expand on the ethic of caring to include listening and friendship. In a theorization of “friendship as method,” (Tillman-Healy, 2003) the researcher’s “primary procedures are those we use to build and sustain friendship: conversation, everyday involvement, compassion, giving, and vulnerability” (734). Furthermore, “we research with an ethic of friendship, a stance of hope, caring, justice, even love” (735). Hope and justice are especially important in culturally relevant research because of the potential to contribute to a more equitable education system. I found a great deal of data in these areas, but also in other areas, such as protection, helping, and mentoring. Most important, I showed that there are potential liabilities of friendship as method. Caring, protection, and helping are potentially problematic in culturally relevant research because sometimes, in order to see themselves as helpful, researchers create an “Other” to help (Max, 2005). The challenge is to be helpful without “othering.” In this project, I tried to envision what I, as a teacher, would want help with, in order to think about how to be helpful to Liz Turner. In this way I sought to avoid othering, but I think it is a tendency that bears constant watch. After all, as a white woman, I may have different needs than she does. The use of listening in friendship as method was a factor in maintaining a critical approach throughout the project.

But caring as part of culturally relevant research extends not just to the primary subject, but to all who are a part of the project—the subjects, such as teacher and students; as well as the school community, including administrators, support people, and other educators. Hence, my attending the counseling sessions for staff on race, the

school's multicultural fair, Glen Singleton's presentation for African American parents in town, etc. Caring even extends to the author of the work studied and her culture. The latter is particularly important because of the history of culturally unresponsive research that has been imposed upon Native people.

### **Fostering social consciousness and critique**

Because of the active effort required to reverse past racism and discrimination in research, I argue that the importance of social consciousness and critique should be greater in culturally relevant research than perhaps it is in current models of culturally relevant pedagogy. At a macro level, this means thinking about how the research project as a whole can help move us toward greater equity and social justice. At a micro level, this means looking and listening carefully for what is *not* seen and heard, as well as what it is. Careful and critical attention to the language in use in a classroom, as well as nonverbal events, is an important part of this effort. The layering of discourse and spatial analysis in Chapter Four exemplifies the kind of culturally relevant research approach I advocate because it helps make visible spatial constraints in the classroom, like the segregation of the five African American girls.

As a researcher, I would have liked to facilitate more robust ways for students to engage in social critique. I met several times with two students in the class who were interested in writing a class newspaper about the Native American unit, with the thought this project held potential for social critique, and I mentored the students in how to interview other students in the class about their experiences, but the students did not manage to complete the project, despite efforts on my part and Liz Turner's part to engage them. On another level, the overall research project has the potential for social

critique. Working collaboratively with Liz Turner to publish an article on the privilege walk in a practitioner journal is a move to make our social critique public.

## **Self reflection**

As Dennis Willems writes in the introduction to *Nurtured by Knowledge*, “Research should be understood as a process of rediscovering and recreating personal and social realities—a definition which recalls the etymology of the word. The word ‘research’ derives from the verb ‘recerchier’ in Old French (rechercher in modern French) meaning ‘to look at again.’ When so understood, it gains a new legitimacy: a legitimacy of liberation” (as cited in Smith, 1997). So, when I advocate self-reflection as a feature of culturally relevant research, I am reclaiming an older definition of research, one focused on liberation, in this case, liberation from past associations of colonization. The use of narrative, with its emphasis on reflection, as theorized by Connelly and Clandinin (1990), is a fitting genre for reporting out such research.

Since the de-colonizing and anti-racist work of culturally relevant research is very demanding, self-reflection is a crucial tool for considering one’s own identity and role in research and the effect of one’s involvement. Self reflection is an important feature of culturally relevant research, and it builds on Grounded Theory and the action research model (Ladson-Billings, 1995). A component of self-reflection for the researcher is considering his or her own identity and role in the project. “[I]ncreasingly, researchers have a story to tell about themselves as well as their work” (Carter, 1993; cited. in Ladson-Billings, 1995; 470). Telling this story helps readers of one’s work understand one’s perspective, rather than accepting it as objective and culture-neutral. I have tried to be frank about my whiteness and privilege in writing up this research project because I

am certain my perspective colors my interpretation of the data. In raising my awareness of my own perspective through self-reflection, I have found tactics of rhetorical listening to be helpful.

*Rhetorical listening and self-reflection*

Two of the moves of rhetorical listening are to promote “an understanding of self and other” and to locate “identifications across commonalities and differences” (Ratcliffe, 2005; 26). Rhetorical listening can be used as a code for “cross-cultural conduct” and requires a “stance of openness” (Ratcliffe, 2005). As part of my self-reflection, another tactic of rhetorical listening I’ve taken up is eavesdropping. Ratcliffe “redefines eavesdropping<sup>49</sup> as an ethical rhetorical tactic and posits it as a means for investigating history, whiteness, and rhetoric” (2005). Ratcliffe weaves a composite definition of eavesdropping that includes the following moves:

Choosing to stand outside . . . in an uncomfortable spot . . . on the border of knowing and not knowing . . . granting others the inside position . . . listening to learn. From such a composite, eavesdropping emerges not as a gendered busybodiness, but as a rhetorical tactic of purposely positioning oneself on the edge of one’s own knowing so as to overhear and learn from others and, I would add, from oneself. (Ratcliffe, 2005; 105)

Eavesdropping as a tactic seems appropriate for a culturally relevant research enterprise in that Ratcliffe advocates it be taken up with “care, respect, and reflection” (106), some of the core values of culturally relevant pedagogy. After all, collecting data from a classroom fulfills some of the composite definition of being an eavesdropper in that the researcher is an outsider, listening in for the purpose of learning. In one case, learning from my videotapes seemed even more like eavesdropping in that I was overhearing

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<sup>49</sup> In excavating the etymologies of eavesdropping, Ratcliffe (2005) found that in Middle English eavesdropper was defined as a person who “stands on the eavesdrop [the spot where the water drips from the eaves] in order to listen to conversations inside the house.”

something not intended. This case occurred near the end of the Wynema Unit when I had stepped out of the room with a student to interview her. Liz Turner did not think the camera was recording, so she encouraged students to tell her what they really thought of the unit: “Since she’s [the researcher’s] not in here, then we don’t have to be nice, no holds barred.” A couple of students said the book was boring, but what was really interesting was that I was able to find out what Liz Turner really thought of the book through eavesdropping:

[O]ne of the criticisms I always have about multicultural literature is that it always shows the poor, oppressed minorities . . . “Oh, the white people have *oppressed* the black man.” . . . Oh, “All the black women get raped by their husbands,” and stuff like that. So all this depressing, depressing literature.

Liz asked her professor (who had assigned the multicultural literature she describes above), “Can we just have a regular story about people who happen to be black or whatever culture, and it’s just a happy ending?” The response from other students in the class showed they did not share her perspective on multicultural literature. As Liz described it, “everybody looked at me as if I were an idiot.” After sharing her experience as a student in her graduate course, she continued pressing on the issue of how multicultural literature is presented:

So it’s almost like anytime we read Native American or African American or Mexican American literature, it’s always got to be about, “It’s hard out here for a pimp,” or, you know, “Illegal aliens smuggle in across the border.” Why can’t we just have books about kids like here in \_\_\_\_\_? Just who live sort of regular, middle class lives? But why? I want to ask why. How come when we do read Native American literature, you know, it’s this. Or, we read about African American literature is like a long time ago. How come it can’t just be multicultural literature like everybody in the story? Regular teens living regular lives. And how come we can’t teach that stuff in school? . . . Well, maybe we need to blow up the whole way we do school and change it.

In reaction to her suggestion, one of the students said, “We don’t have the power,” to which Liz Turner replied, “Well, I don’t have the power either. . . . But as a new teacher here, one who won’t be here at the end of next year, I feel like I need to do what I’m told to do. So I need to like teach what I’m told to teach.” This discussion goes on for several pages in the transcript, with Liz Turner returning several times to the wish that the books her students read could just be about regular teenagers who just happen to be multicultural and are just living their usual teenage lives, without focusing on the (stereotypical) negatives of their particular background. While I have characterized Liz Turner as a solid multicultural educator elsewhere in this dissertation, what I overhear from this transcript is that she does not want to be teaching multicultural literature as it is currently envisioned. She finds the themes too depressing. What I also hear is her feeling that she has a lack of power to teach what she wants to teach—young adult works that are not canonical, but also not overtly “multicultural,” works in which multiculturalism is incidental.

By eavesdropping purposefully as an outsider to this classroom discussion, I realized that Liz Turner had very strong opinions about multicultural literature, opinions she had not shared with me directly. The indirect overhearing, which, interestingly, may have been partly intentional, as one of the students did inform her that the camera’s recording light was on, was important for me to reflect on.

More opportunities for rhetorical listening occurred when Liz Turner shared the papers she had written about the project with me. Again, I learned about strong opinions she had about the choice of book (*Wynema*) that she had never revealed to me directly:

Not only was some of the prose problematic for students (one-third of whom were designated as special education), several chapters included

stereotypes that I wasn't sure that students would be able to contextualize appropriately, considering their age level and the community's very public debates about the racial achievement gap. Although I was told that as co-researcher, I could make changes to the structure of the unit and the design of the activities (a level of agency that I increasingly took towards the end as I became more familiar and comfortable with the material), I was also concerned with sequencing.

Listening along the borders of my project yielded some important material, as can be seen above. Specifically, Liz Turner's concerns about whether students would be able to contextualize the stereotypes in the novel, a criticism Craig Womack has raised about *Wynema*, were important for me to know as a culturally relevant researcher because she placed those concerns within the context of the community's debates about the racial achievement gap. Her concerns with sequencing had to do with the list of key questions (each day in the unit focused on a key question, such as "How can we understand and talk about cultural practices different from our own?"). Liz Turner wrote, "I believed that some of these questions would prove to be difficult cognitive tasks that would result in frustration for struggling students," calling them "philosophical issues that learned scholars have spent entire careers attempting to answer."

Liz Turner knows her students well. Before the unit was underway, students did a preliminary survey, and a student who had read ahead had this to say, "So far I do not like *Wynema*, it has not grabbed my attention at all." In the final survey, students had more negative comments about the novel. In answer to the question, "What did you find puzzling/troubling/confusing about reading Native American Literature?" the students responded thus:

- I got confused because I didn't understand some things (3 responses)
- it's boring (2 responses)
- the fact that they use a different method to draw you in

- the story was hard to engage into
- I didn't know how Native Americans could lose 500 Nations from government suppression
- I didn't like to learn about the bad stereotypes and other things that they have to go through.
- Nothing (2 responses)
- Nothing, I had a lot that I learned.

These comments show that Liz Turner's students had some of the same confusion that students in my pilot study had in terms of finding the novel difficult to engage with and also some of the confusion resulting from lack of background knowledge. They also felt some discomfort at learning of "bad stereotypes." Taken together with what Liz wrote in her paper about her concern for her students' learning styles and how well they could handle the dilemma of a book by an American Indian woman that stereotyped Indians, I get a much better sense as a researcher of what her cultural concerns are.

As a culturally relevant researcher, I am continuing to reflect on the project. If I had not been a researcher in Liz Turner's classroom, she most likely would not have taught a NA/AI text in the first place, so the research project itself caused a change in curriculum. Granted, it only affected three classes, but I think it was worthwhile, even if only for those 68 students. Reading *Wynema* ignited a gendered and raced conflagration in the classroom, and this could have caused more harm than good, though Liz Turner stated that overall the experience had been "healing" for her and her students.

Further self-reflection and "eavesdropping," has made me realize that I was not fully aware of the risks of the project for Liz. It was not until I read her scholarly work a year and a half after the project that I found out how deep Liz Turner's apprehensions were about being the researched. In a paper she presented on the experience of participating in this project, she wrote, "people like me have had a tense relationship with

research and researchers for a long time” and that she entered her doctoral studies telling her friends and family not to worry for she would be “the researcher, not the researched. Never the researched” (Turner, 2007). Despite the seeming finality of this statement, Liz Turner volunteered her classroom for this project, but again, I would not know her reasons for doing so until much later—and through a tactic of eavesdropping—when she wrote:

One of my three classes at the high school had become a source of management angst for me, the first that I had faced in many years. I suspected that some of the authority issues that had arisen might have stemmed from my precarious positioning as a black teacher from a notorious inner city district. This class at the time consisted of mostly white, middle class students. [The] research would both provide an opportunity for me to gain some insight in why previously successful management techniques were not working with this group. Also there was the issue of “the body”—having a white, university researcher designating my classroom worthy to be researched would help skeptical students understand that yes, competence can actually come dipped in chocolate . . . and would provide a window in to why I was never at the school in the afternoon. (Turner, 2007)

Liz had a classroom management problem to solve, and it had to do with authority related to her “precarious positioning as a black teacher” in a class of “mostly white, middle class students.” In other words, race was an issue before I ever entered this classroom. Reading Liz Turner’s scholarly work about the project has changed my perspective. For example, while I thought issues of race seemed to *emerge* from my analysis of the data, what I have learned from “eavesdropping” on her work is that they were actually simmering in the months leading up to my entering her classroom.

While one of Liz’s motivations for participating in this research project was to “gain some insight,” she also believed that just my physical presence, as a white person, as a university researcher would improve things. That is, my very presence would

validate her as competent and help “skeptical students,” whom we can read as the white middle class students, see beyond the color of her skin.

Reading Liz’s account of how I came to be conducting research in her classroom sheds light on some patterns I had noticed but was not certain how to characterize. For example, I sensed that Liz Turner wanted me to choose her third hour class for study, though she did not say so explicitly. Now I understand why I sensed that—getting support for that class was one of her motivations for participating in the project. I also noticed a pattern of references to me and the camera as serving as protection for her. Sometimes she would make little jokes about the camera to the class, like saying she could use the videotapes in parent-teacher conferences, but the most explicit statement she made about the camera that communicated to me her view of it as protecting her was in the e-mail she wrote me after the powder keg day: “What a day to miss, eh? And yet, I do wonder if events would have occurred like that if you (and the camera!) had been in the room. We’ll never know, right?” (personal communication, March 25, 2006).

Similarly, the most compelling meaning of analyzing data for this project has emerged from dialogue that Liz Turner and I have shared. Just as Ladson-Billings noted that “it was the teachers’ explanations and clarifications that helped construct the meaning of what transpired in classrooms” (1995; 473), so has it been with Liz Turner and me. I have posted all of the data and all of my drafts on a website to which Liz Turner has full access, and she has used the data to write three scholarly pieces of her own. In one of them, she analyzes this particular day in class with the following questions in mind: “After some experiences as a teacher, was I as effective as I thought I was? Was I clearly communicating my expectations to my students?” Her theoretical frame was the

work of systemic functional linguistics researcher Francis Christie and her use of the pedagogic device: “Its imaginary role is to recontextualize received knowledge from an authoritative source (in the case of public schools, the state), and to transmit this knowledge to students, who demonstrate their capacity for reproducing this knowledge through satisfactory performance in teacher evaluations” (Turner, 2007). Reading this helps me construct meaning of what happened in the classroom differently. From Liz’s perspective, creating a shared reader position with students was important, and challenges to her authority were impediments to her being able to create this. I perhaps was overly focused on viewing authority from raced and gendered lenses; to Liz this may have been more of a pedagogical issue.

Although I have looked at specific features of culturally relevant pedagogy that provide groundwork for a culturally relevant research approach, it is important to think of these features holistically. Culturally responsive teachers “view learning as having intellectual, academic, personal, social, ethical, and political dimensions, all of which are developed in concert with one another” (Gay, 2000; 151). Culturally responsive researchers should also think of these features as working together.

## ***Conclusion***

In many ways this dissertation can be seen as the narrative of one teacher’s experience implementing a culturally relevant unit on *Wynema*, a work of NA/AI literature. In sharing what Liz Turner and I have learned about pedagogy, it seems fitting to employ the following feature of the American Indian intellectual tradition: learning is storied (Powell, 2007). That is, the story, or narrative, is the primary method of teaching and learning. A story is “a narrative with a certain very specific syntactic shape

(beginning-middle-end or situation-transformation-situation)” (Scholes, 1982; 210).

Usually the beginning or situation involves some kind of predicament. The predicament of my research narrative was the conflict of what Liz Turner called the “powder keg” day; Liz Turner, of course, is the protagonist in this story; and the sequence of events included Liz negotiating her authority, the use of a privilege walk, and the desegregation of the classroom functions as a kind of resolution. However, there is another layer of story as well, that of the researcher. As I have reflected on my role in this story, I have thought about the ways in which my research approach is culturally relevant.

Besides storied knowledge, another feature of the American Indian intellectual tradition is the need to write for dual audiences, for Indians and for non-Indians, as can be seen in the nonfiction writing of early authors like Apess, Eastman, and Winnemucca, as well as in the works of more recent theorists like Vine Deloria, LaVonne Brown Ruoff,<sup>50</sup> Robert Warrior, and Gerald Vizenor. Although non-Native, I also desire this work to appeal to the conventions of multiple audiences—Native and non-Native, theorists and practitioners—and one of the ways to do this is to demonstrate that I value alternative methodologies such as narrative and that they are capable of conveying my findings. This choice is one example of how I am beginning to practice what I will call culturally relevant research.

Culturally relevant research, as I have envisioned it thus far, builds on theories of culturally responsive pedagogy. As Geneva Gay, one of the major theorists of culturally responsive pedagogy, stated in calling for culturally responsive administration, it is not enough to practice the features of cultural relevance in the classroom; for substantive

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<sup>50</sup> Ruoff is non-Native, but still writes in the American Indian intellectual tradition.

change to take place, other levels of the school system must also engage in culturally relevant practices. I argue that this work should be extended to research as well and have sought to sketch out how the following actions contribute to a culturally relevant research approach: holding high standards, valuing language, valuing community, enacting an ethic of caring to include friendship, fostering social critique, and self reflection—but enacting them on different levels. Rhetorical listening is an especially important tool for culturally relevant research, and, as is the case with culturally relevant pedagogy, the individual qualities of culturally relevant research should be engaged synergistically. It is the element of synergy, coupled with deep self-reflection, that suggests a theory of culturally relevant research may have the flexibility needed to adapt to different cultural contexts.

## Appendix One: Culturally-Relevant Pedagogical Framework

This unit follows a framework I created based on a review of literature about pedagogical approaches to Native American literature. I have incorporated self-reflexivity into my framework at nearly every stage, for both students and for teachers, following Giroux's recommendation that, "As teachers we need to reach into our own histories and attempt to understand how issues of class, culture, gender, and race have left their imprint upon how we think and act" (241). This was a guiding principle I followed as I created the following framework:

- Pre-teaching phase:

- importance of cultural background knowledge,
- attention to misconceptions about Native Americans,
- acknowledgement of the breadth of the literature

- Active teaching phase:

- explanation of the literary conventions of Native American literatures.
- pedagogical structures that reflect/complement Native American literatures
- ongoing reflection by teacher and students
- continued attention to misconceptions about Native Americans

- Post-teaching/reflection phase:

- a rethinking of how we envision "American Literature"
- a return to issues generated in the pre-teaching phase

## **First Year Composition: Reading, Thinking, Talking and Writing about Native American Literature**

English 124-029

Fall 2005

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:00-11:30

2454 Mason Hall

Instructor:	Kelly Sassi
Office:	2030 School of Education Building (take NE stairwell to second floor, enter the JPEE office suite door to the right of technological services and go down the stairs. My office is the 3 <sup>rd</sup> on your right)
Office Hours:	Fridays 10:30-12:30
Mailbox:	3161 Angell Hall
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:ksassi@umich.edu">ksassi@umich.edu</a>

Welcome to a unique English 124 course focusing on Native American literature. In this course we will immerse ourselves in poetry, novels, nonfiction and short stories by Native Americans from many different tribes, from the first novel by a Native American woman to the recent works of contemporary Native American writers. With such variety in genre, tribal background, and time period, one of our challenges in this course will be reaching for the depth necessary to fully appreciate each piece. Along the way, we will wrestle with the following questions:

- How much background information is necessary to understand a work of Native American literature?
- How do my own reading filters help me or hinder me in approaching works by Native Americans?
- How do elements of culture, including race, gender, and class influence our reading of these texts?
- Do we read these works using the conventions of European and American literature or do we need to develop a set of Native American literary conventions, and if so, what are they?
- How can reading these works help us expand our understanding of other literatures, our world, and ourselves?

As these questions suggest, you will be invited to adopt an introspective approach to these texts and also think about the effect of these elements on your own style. As Henry Giroux says, “[W] need to reach into our own histories and attempt to understand how issues of class, culture, gender, and race have left their imprint upon how we think and act.”

Because there are so many sub-skills that go into writing, from lower-order thinking skills like knowing whether your pronouns agree with your antecedents, to higher-order thinking skills like how to structure an argument or adopt a style that will be effective for your purpose and audience, no two people have exactly the same strengths and weaknesses as writers. For that reason, this course emphasizes your individual development as a writer. I will meet with you one-on-one at least twice during the semester (additional meetings can take place during my office hours), and small, peer feedback groups will be set up and monitored for you to work on specific qualities of your writing. You will have several opportunities for meta-cognitive reflection on your progress as a writer. All of these activities will assist you in being more active and self-directed in your learning.

Pre-writing, drafting, peer feedback, individual conferences, revision, proofreading, and editing will all be parts of the process. While no formal, full-blown research paper is required, techniques of research will be practiced. All of the reading, discussion, and writing that we do will help you improve your writing and increase your confidence in your ability as a writer. It will also prepare you to take part in academic discourse.

### **Required Books:**

Alexie, Sherman. *Lone Ranger and Tonto: Fistfight in Heaven*.

Callahan, S. Alice. *Wynema: A Child of the Forest*. A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, Ed.  
Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1997.

Erdrich, Louise. *Tracks*. New York: Harper Collins, 1988

Momaday, N. Scott. *House Made of Dawn*. New York: Harper Collins, 1966.

Niatum, Duane. *Harper's Anthology of Native American Poetry*. San Francisco:  
Harper's, 1988.

Ruppert, James and John Bernet, Eds. *Our Voices*. Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 2001.

### **Recommended Resources:**

A grammar handbook (I will bring several examples to our first class meeting)

A dictionary & thesaurus

Sweetland Writing Center. Room 1139 Angell Hall . Phone #: 764-0429

## Your Grade

Major Papers	
Essay #1: Self-Reflective exploration of reading filters (3-4 pages)	5%
Essay #2: Literary Analysis (4-6 pages)	20%
Essay #3: Comparison/Contrast (~6 pages)	15%
Essay #4: Synthesis (8-9 pages)	25%
Reading Journal	20%
Peer Response	5%
Class Discussion	10%

“There of necessity will be much arguing,  
much writing, many opinions; for opinion in  
good men is but knowledge in the making.”  
—John Milton

## Policies and Procedures

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism—using material from other sources without giving credit to those sources—is a form of stealing and carries severe consequences.

Submitting the same paper to more than one course without the instructor’s permission and cutting and pasting text from the internet without citing the source are examples of violations of the university’s academic honor code. At the University of Michigan, plagiarism may also lead to failure of the course, and can lead to expulsion if repeated. We will go over plagiarism—and how to avoid it—in class, but remember, understanding and avoiding plagiarism is ultimately your responsibility. You are responsible for reading the university’s statement on plagiarism, located at [www.lsa.umich.edu/English/undergraduate/plag.htm](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/English/undergraduate/plag.htm).

Attendance: You are expected to be present for, on time for, and actively participating in all classes. The collaborative nature of our studies and the emphasis on discussion and in-class writing activities make attendance crucial in this course. More than 3 absences results in the loss of 1/3 letter grade for each day missed (Example: 4 absences results in a final grade of A being lowered to a B+). 2 tardies=1 absence. If you have an extenuating circumstance, such as surgery in the hospital, please communicate with me and we will decide together on how to coordinate your class responsibilities with your personal situation.

Late Work: Please have work done on time. The flow of the class depends on it; I will usually have you do something related to the paper due at our class meeting. You are allowed one case of “Dog ate my homework” and one case of “My printer ran out of ink, and that’s why I don’t have my essay.” In either case, to receive credit at all, the work must be handed in at the next class meeting; it will still be assessed a 10% penalty for being late. Therefore, plan ahead (keep homework out of dog’s reach and have extra printer cartridges on hand). Please note: even if you do not have the assigned work, it is in your best interest to attend class to avoid falling further behind.

Essay Preferences: All essays should be formatted according to MLA (Modern Language Association) Standards. Please use black ink on white paper and print your essay single sided, double-spaced, in 12-point easy-to-read font. One staple in the upper left corner is sufficient. Please, no title pages or plastic binders. Be sure to make a copy of your essay before you hand it in, in case MY dog eats YOUR essay.

Accommodations: Should you require any adjustments to the requirements of this course as a result of religious observance, handicap, disability, or other special need, please advise me during the first week of the course so the appropriate provision can be made for you.

I'll close this syllabus with a taste of what we'll be reading. Here is a poem by Native American poet Maurice Kennedy:

First Rule

stones must form a circle first not a wall  
open so that it may expand  
to take in new grass and hills  
tall pines and a river  
expand as sun on weeds, an elm, robins;  
the prime importance is to circle stones  
where footsteps are erased by winds  
assured old men and wolves sleep  
where children play games  
catch snow flakes if they wish;  
words cannot be spoken first

as summer turns spring  
caterpillars into butterflies  
new stones will be found for the circle;  
it will ripple out a pool  
grown from the touch  
of a water-spider's wing;  
words cannot be spoken first

that is the way to start  
with stones forming a wide circle  
marsh marigolds in bloom  
hawks hunting mice  
boys climbing hills  
to sit under the sun to dream  
of eagle wings and antelope  
words cannot be spoken first

Appendix Three: Preliminary survey for students

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What, in your mind, makes a work of literature truly great? Be specific and descriptive.
2. What is your favorite book, story or poem?
3. Describe your previous experiences with Native American Literature.
4. Is there anything that you remember to be puzzling/troubling/confusing about reading Native American Literature?
5. What strategies did you use to overcome your difficulties?
6. What did you find most interesting, beautiful, or rewarding about reading or listening to Native American Literature?
7. If you have never read Native American Literature before, describe your expectations as we begin to read some in this unit.
8. How do you define culture?
9. What culture do you feel you belong to? What are your culture's main values?
10. Through what texts/sources/experiences do you learn about your culture?

Appendix Four: Student Consent Form  
Principal investigator contact information: Kelly Sassi  
2532 Stone Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
(734) 647-2155 ksassi@umich.edu

March 14, 2006

Dear student,

I am seeking your assent to use the following materials in my project, which involves research. The purpose of my research is to learn more effective methods of teaching Native American literature.

I will observe the class before and after the Native American unit, which is scheduled to start on March 6. During the unit, I will also videotape the class. You will take a brief (10-15 minute) survey before and after the unit as part of regular classroom activities. In addition, I would like to interview some students about their experiences learning Native American literature. These interviews would take about 20 minutes. You can choose to skip any questions on the surveys and interview. In addition, I would like to study your writing portfolio to compare the written language with oral language use. The Ann Arbor Public School district, Pioneer High School, and the teacher have agreed for me to conduct the study. Participation is completely voluntary. The benefit to you would be an opportunity to reflect on your learning of Native American literature. The benefit to others would be a greater understanding of effective approaches to teaching Native American literature. There are no known risks of participating in this research project.

A transcript will be made of the videotaped classes and a pseudonym will be assigned to you. Therefore, neither your name nor image will be publicly revealed. The original videotape will be retained by me in a locked place until I complete my doctoral thesis and then it will be destroyed. Transcripts and other written materials will be retained by me in the event that future research is done to compare findings. **It is important to know that whether you choose to grant consent or not, your grade for the course remains unaffected by your decision.** If you have any questions about the study, I am happy to answer them (see contact information above). You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate, I will protect your privacy by destroying any notes or materials and by blacking out any of your oral contributions to classroom discussion on audio or videotape.

Should you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please contact the Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Kate Kever, 540 E. Liberty St. Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210 (734) 936-0933, email: irbhsbs@umich.edu  
Yes, I grant assent to participate in this research project.

\_\_\_\_\_ student signature

\_\_\_\_\_ date

Please check the items you are willing to let me use for my research:

\_\_\_\_\_ copies of your essays,

\_\_\_\_\_ your homework and in-class written work,

\_\_\_\_\_ your contributions to class discussion on videotape,

\_\_\_\_\_ your survey,

\_\_\_\_\_ an interview with you.

I approve the use of the above materials.

\_\_\_\_\_ student signature

\_\_\_\_\_ date

Appendix Five: Coding Matrix for Understanding

<b>explanation</b> sophisticated and apt theories and illustrations, which provide knowledgeable and justified accounts of events, actions, and ideas (brown)	<b>interpretation</b> interpretations, narratives, and translations that provide meaning (purple)	<b>application</b> ability to use knowledge effectively in new situations and diverse, realistic contexts (orange)	<b>perspective</b> critical and insightful points of view (blue)	<b>empathy</b> the ability to get inside another person's feelings and worldview (pink)	<b>self-knowledge</b> the wisdom to know one's ignorance and how one's pattern of thought and action inform as well as prejudice understanding (yellow)
	"I think discrimination usually goes away with generations, but sometimes more action is necessary"		"Activities like this really do affect people. Activities like this can either separate a group or bring it together. "	"I liked this activity because you would never think that a lot of people would have been through the same things that you have been through"	"I've been discriminated against by my own race before"
			"This shows that racism still lives, not in the open, but in other ways"	"We need to take a look around because all races go through the same thing we go through"	"I just don't understand how the class you're in can affect you for your whole life"

Appendix Five: Coding Matrix for Understanding (con't.)

explanation	interpretation	application	perspective	empathy	self-knowledge
				<p>“I don’t think it is right to judge someone from where they come from because it’s not their fault and they can’t help it”</p>	<p>“You may think there is no racism left, but . . . there is still a lot of it, you just can’t see most of it in your everyday life”</p>
				<p>“The privilege walk was very interesting and it really made me realize that there are some people that are not as privileged and they have to go through a lot more than I thought”</p>	<p>“To me, it was surprising how many were in the back”</p>
				<p>“I learned that others are affected in life more than others because of their race, ethnicity, and gender, some who are not make suffer more and have more difficult experiences in life, just like those of a different background”</p>	<p>“I thought that the privilege walk was not at all shocking”</p>

Appendix Five: Coding Matrix for Understanding (con't.)

explanation	interpretation	application	perspective	empathy	self- knowledge
					<p>“This whole experience made me think about how we treat each other and where we all come from. Like when Ms. Turner was talkin’ she made me want to cry because it’s like everything that she was sayin’ is so true . . .”</p>
					<p>“I wasn’t surprised when I saw that most of the white kids were in the front of the class and the black students were way in the back. If somebody would have made me predict, I would have gotten everything correct”</p>
					<p>This made me realize how much my Mexican background affects my life”</p>

Appendix Five: Coding Matrix for Understanding (con't.)

overall positive evaluation of the experience (green)	overall negative evaluation of the experience (red)
<p>“I felt that the privilege walk was a cool experiment”</p>	<p>“I felt that this activity was unnecessary because I already know about other people’s status as well as min. this just made people feel bad about how they grew up...My friends and I know about the things that that heppen. We didn’t need them to go public”</p>
<p>This is a great lesson activity and works really well, but I have a few problems with it. I think there is a slight moral issue with teaching kids about discriminating systems by slamming a label on each and every one of them. Maybe you could hand out cards that designate your temporary race and class. Just a thought. And is it just me or are all of our methods of solving racism by using counter racism?</p>	

Appendix Six: Final Survey

**Final survey for students**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What did you find puzzling/troubling/confusing about reading Native American Literature?
2. What strategies did you use to overcome your difficulties?
3. What did you find most supportive/helpful to your learning during the unit?
4. What is the most useful thing you learned during this unit?
5. How has your work during this unit changed or not changed the way you think about culture?
6. What previous knowledge about literature did you find most helpful in understanding Native American literature?
7. From looking at the transcripts of the videotapes and doing follow-up interviews, it appears that the privilege walk day was a pivotal moment in the unit. How did this activity affect you?
8. How did the privilege walk activity change the class?
9. I noticed that prior to the privilege walk activity, the African American girls in the class all sat together at the back of the classroom, but afterward, they started sitting closer to the front of the classroom and on both sides of the front part. Do you agree with this observation?
10. Pretend you are the researcher, what could this change mean?

Thank you very much for participating in my research project. Please let me know if you have any further comments or questions below, and feel free to contact me at any time if you have additional thoughts. -Kelly

## Appendix Seven: Transcription Notations

### ***Transcription symbols***

- (.5) The number in brackets indicates a time gap in tenths of a second.
- (.) A dot enclosed in a bracket indicates a pause in the talk of less than two tenths of a second.
- .hh A dot before an 'h' indicates speaker in-breath; the more 'h's, the longer the in-breath.
- hh An 'h' indicates an out-breath; the more 'h's, the longer the out-breath.
- (( )) A description enclosed in a double bracket indicates a non-verbal activity, for example ((*banging sound*)).
- A dash indicates the sharp cut-off of the prior word or sound.
- : Colons indicate that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound or letter. The more colons the greater the extent of the stretching.
- ( ) Empty parentheses indicate the presence of an unclear fragment on the tape.
- (guess) The words within a single bracket indicate the transcriber's best guess at an unclear fragment.
- . A full stop indicates a stopping fall in tone. It does not necessarily indicate the end of a sentence.
- , A comma indicates a continuing intonation.
- ? A question mark indicates a rising inflection. It does not necessarily indicate a question.
- Under Underlined fragments indicate speaker emphasis.
- ↑↓ Pointed arrows indicate a marked falling or rising intonational shift. They are placed immediately before the onset of the shift.
- CAPITALS With the exception of proper nouns, capital letters indicate a section of speech noticeably louder than that surrounding it.
- °° Degree signs are used to indicate that the talk they encompass is spoken noticeably quieter than the surrounding talk.
- > < 'More than' and 'less than' signs indicate that the talk they encompass was produced noticeably quicker than the surrounding talk.
- = The 'equals' sign indicates contiguous utterances.
- [ ] Square brackets between adjacent lines of concurrent speech indicate the onset and end of a spate of overlapping talk.
- [[ A double left-hand bracket indicates that speakers start a turn simultaneously.

A more detailed description of these transcription symbols can be found in Atkinson and Heritage, 1984: ix–xvi.

Appendix Eight: Teacher Consent Form

Principal investigator contact information: Kelly Sassi  
2532 Stone Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
(734) 647-2155  
ksassi@umich.edu

11 January 2005

Dear teacher,

Thank you for inviting me into your classroom to conduct research during a unit on Native American literature. The purpose of my research is to study pedagogical approaches to teaching Native American literature. Participation is completely voluntary. The benefit to you would be an opportunity to reflect on your own teaching of Native American literature. The benefit to others would be a greater understanding of effective approaches to teaching Native American literature. I plan to collect the following data from your students: copies of essays, homework and in-class written work, contributions to class discussion, surveys which will take about 10 minutes to complete, and interviews. I plan to collect the following data from you: audiotapes of our planning sessions, videotapes of your teaching, and e-mail messages in regard to the project.

A transcript will be made of our audio and videotapes, and a pseudonym will be assigned to you. Therefore, neither your name nor your image will be publicly revealed. The original videotape will be retained by me in a locked place until I complete my doctoral thesis and then it will be destroyed. Transcripts and other written materials will be retained by me in the event that future research is done to compare findings. These efforts are to protect your privacy, which is subject to minimal risk during this research study. Although risk is minimal, it is possible that people in our joint program or professors may find out your identity, and this poses a slight risk to you because they might find out things about your teaching or classroom that you would prefer to remain confidential. For example, my major professor, Anne Gere, is aware of your identity because she is the one who recommended that I contact you and she will be reading drafts of my research. Agreeing to participate in this research project also represents a time commitment for you of up to 3 hours a week of meeting time. If you have any questions about the study, I am happy to answer them (see contact information above). You have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose not to participate, I will protect your privacy by destroying any notes or materials by you and by blacking out any of your oral contributions to classroom discussion on audio or videotape.

Should you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in research, please contact the Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board, Kate Keever, 540 E. Liberty St. Suite 202, Ann Arbor, MI 48104-2210 (734) 936-0933, email: irbhsbs@umich.edu

Please sign at the appropriate place below:

Yes, I grant Kelly Sassi consent to research the materials described above.

---

signature

---

date

Appendix Nine: Results of Question 1 from the Preliminary Survey  
 What, in your mind, makes a work of literature truly great?

interesting to me (13 responses)	descriptive (3 responses)	true (2 responses)	entertaining (2 responses)	exciting (2 responses)
It has to keep my interest and draw me into the story	To me, good literature allows readers to be able to close their eyes and be able to imagine themselves in characters	When things are related to true life stories	fun to do, not just textbook work	Something new and exciting
To be able to grab every kind of readers and draw them in	A great work of literature to me is very descriptive	the theme relates to real life	funny, cliffhanger	lots of action
When something pulls you in, then the piece is poetic and flows	detail—not too much where you just don't want to read it but enough to know what things are			
Something that grabs your attention and doesn't let go				
I believe that good book has to be interesting				
it needs to draw me in and make me never want to put it down				
when you can relate to the material				
If it is interesting and makes you want to keep reading, then it is great				
if it relates to something in the family				
I think what makes literature great is a book that interests me				
interesting				
I think that if it is interesting, weather it has good writing or not, I like it				
Being interesting and different makes literature great for example, when				

people see Native American book they automatically think about these copper skin people with two long braids and it would be fascinating				
--	--	--	--	--

## Appendix Ten: Results of Question 2 from the Preliminary Survey

Question 2—What is your favorite book, story or poem?—complements Question 1 and gives insight into what students actually find interesting. The class list reveals that the students have a variety of interests. Only two titles were mentioned more than once, and each of these only twice: Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings.

any Harry Potter, action

Any Dr. Seuss and Harry Potter

The Lord of the Rings trilogy

Lord of the Rings

Finding Buck McHenry

Raise the Titanic by Clive Cussler

The Outsiders

"You Don't Know Me"

Cool Hand Luke

God Still Don't Like Ugly

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock."

Memoirs of a Geisha

The A-List

the Bible

The Color Purple

Fahrenheit 451 or October Country

I forgot the title but it's about Stephen Biko and Patrice Lumumba

I read all the time I don't have a favorite book

I have a lot.

no favorite

Appendix Eleven: Results of Question 3 from the Preliminary Survey  
Describe your previous experience with Native American Literature

Students with no experience with Native American Literatures <b>(11 responses)</b>	Students who feel they have had some experience but don't remember it clearly or specifically <b>(4 responses)</b>	Students who left the question blank or wrote "I don't know." <b>(3 responses)</b>	Students who have had experience with Native American literatures <b>(2 responses)</b>
none	elementary school reading	I don't know	I have read many books on native American literature and have learned that Native Americans were treated poorly.
none	I have not had a lot	I don't really remember	Well I am slightly Native American, so everything in the Native American category that I have learned is about mandellas and other stereotypical stuff.
none	I'm not really sure what it is. I remember learning somewhat about it.	blank	
none	I don't remember, I don't think I have		
none			
none			
I have read none			
never read one before			
none until recently			
I don't really have any experiences with Native American literature			
I don't remember anything or even if I previously read Native American Lit.			

Appendix Twelve: Sample Boarding School Timetable  
 Oglala Boarding School 1931-32  
 Pine Ridge, South Dakota  
 Daily Program  
 Monday a.m.

Rising Bell and Reveille	6:00	
First Call	6:50	
Assembly	6:55	
Breakfast	7:00	
Work Call	7:45	
Industrial Details Report	7:45	
Industrial Session	7:45-9:15	
School Call	First 8:15	Second 8:20
Academic Session	8:30-11:40	
Recall	11:45	
Dinner	11:55	
		p.m.
School Call	First 12:45	Second 12:50
Academic Session	12:50-4:00	
Industrial Detail Report	3:00	
Athletic Teams practice	4:00-5:00	
Recall	5:00	
Retreat	5:20	
Supper	5:30	
Religious instruction by missionaries	6:15-7:15	
Call to quarters	8:45	
Tattoo	8:50	
Taps and Lights out	9:00	

Ask students to compare and contrast representations of schooling in *Wynema* with their own experiences of schooling. Students could create their own timetable and compare it with that of Native American boarding school students. What are the similarities and differences? Students could write about how they feel about the way their day is scheduled. They could then read the following excerpt from Zitkala-Sa's memoir of her school days:

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. . . A small bell was tapped and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing the act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side.

But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more. (89-90)

Ask students to compare and contrast their response to their own schedule to Zitkala-S's response to hers. Teachers can do the same exercise, sketching out the timetable of their teaching days and writing a response to it.

- The novel we are about to read was published in 1891 and is considered the first novel by a Native American woman. The novel opens in the main character, Wynema's village. How do you think Indian life will be portrayed in this village?
- On the back cover of the novel, it says that two women characters of the novel share a belief in Indian reform. What is Indian reform?
- When we say a novel is romantic, what does that mean to you? (Students might think of romantic in terms of popular romance instead of as a literary period—this question gives the teacher an opportunity to find out what background knowledge students are bringing to the unit).
- Think of a time you changed your perceptions about someone. What made you change your mind?
- Have you or someone you know been the target of racism or prejudice? How did you deal with the episode?

### Appendix Thirteen: Wynema Lesson Plan

The part of the unit plan created by the researcher that the teacher drew from for the first day of the unit is actually Day 7 of the unit plan. The teacher modified the original plan to fit her students. The original plan reads as follows:

**Today's Key Question:** How does our research help us gain background knowledge about Native Americans?

<b>Wynema Unit</b>	<b>Week: 2 Day: 7</b>
<b>Today's goal:</b> Students will understand QARs. Students will research background information on <i>Wynema</i> .	
<b>Unit Goals addressed by today's lesson:</b> Students will examine their beliefs about Native Americans and Native American literature and challenge those beliefs.	
<b>NCTE standards addressed by today's lesson:</b> 7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g. print and on-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.	
<b>Materials Needed:</b> Research Status Report	

Activity/ Time Estimate	Description	Teacher's Reflection
Opening Activity	Mini-lecture on Question-Answer Relationships (QARs)	
Students do research in library	Student groups research background information in library and computer lab for the period.	
Closure/Assessment	Due at end of class: "Research Status Report" for each group	
<b>Homework:</b> Read <i>Wynema</i> Ch. 8, pp. 30-33 and create 4 QARs		
To follow up on for next lesson:		

Appendix Fourteen: Windows on *Wynema*: Researching Background Information

Topic	Resources
Muscogee/Creek Indian Tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•MSU: <a href="http://www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/cultural/northamerica/creek_indians.html">www.anthro.mankato.msus.edu/cultural/northamerica/creek_indians.html</a></li> <li>•North Georgia research center: <a href="http://www.ngeorgia.com/history/creek.html">www.ngeorgia.com/history/creek.html</a></li> <li>• Muscogee (Creek) Nation official website: <a href="http://www.ocevnet.org/creek/">www.ocevnet.org/creek/</a></li> </ul>
Sioux Indian Tribe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.siuoux.org">www.siuoux.org</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.slu.edu/classes/CS-150/CSTK160.Spring.97/Project.2/hebel/SIOUX~1.HTM">http://www.slu.edu/classes/CS-150/CSTK160.Spring.97/Project.2/hebel/SIOUX~1.HTM</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKsioux.html">http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKsioux.html</a></li> </ul>
S. Alice Callahan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Editor’s Introduction by Lavonne Ruoff pp. Xiii-xlviii</li> <li>•”Sophia Alice Callahan” by Annette Van Dyke</li> </ul>
allotment/The Dawes Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/eight/dawes.htm">http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/resources/archives/eight/dawes.htm</a></li> <li>• “Allotment Protest and Tribal Discourse: Reading <i>Wynema</i>’s Successes and Shortcomings” Siobhan Senior</li> <li>• <a href="http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/native/dawes.htm">http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/statutes/native/dawes.htm</a></li> </ul>
Publishing history/reception of <i>Wynema</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Publisher’s Preface p. ix</li> <li>•Editor’s Introduction by Lavonne Ruoff pp. Xiii-xlviii</li> <li>•An introduction to <i>Wynema</i> by Annette Van Dyke</li> <li>•“Alice Callahan’s <i>Wynema</i>: A Fledgling Attempt” by Craig Womack</li> </ul>
19 <sup>th</sup> Century writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “<i>Wynema</i> and Nineteenth Century Writing” by Annette Van Dyke</li> <li>•”Rum and Religion: An Inquiry into the Work of William Apress and S. Alice Callahan”</li> <li>• “On the Meeting Grounds of Sentiment: S. Alice Callahan’s <i>Wynema: A Child of the Forest</i>” by Susan Bernardin</li> </ul>
Wounded Knee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• see notes for pp. 92 &amp; 100 in text</li> <li>•<a href="http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/places/states/dakotas/dk_wounded.htm">http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/places/states/dakotas/dk_wounded.htm</a></li> <li>•<a href="http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKIntro.html">http://www.bgsu.edu/departments/acs/1890s/woundedknee/WKIntro.html</a></li> </ul>
Historical Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Brief Timeline of American Literature and Events” 1890-1899 <a href="http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/1890.htm">http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/1890.htm</a></li> </ul>
Native American Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “The School Days of an Indian Girl” <i>American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings</i> by Zitkala-Sa. New York: Penguin, 2003.</li> <li>• Walker, Cheryl. <i>Native American Literature and Nineteenth-Century Nationalisms</i>. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997. pp. 146-148</li> <li>• handout on boarding school schedule</li> </ul>

## Appendix Fifteen: Questions from the Privilege Walk

If your ancestors were forced to come to the U.S. not by choice, take one step backward

If your ancestors were in North America before Columbus, take a step back.

If your primary ethnic identity is American, take one step forward.

If you were ever called names because of your race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.

If there were people of color who worked in your household as servants, gardeners, etc. take one step forward.

If you were ever ashamed or embarrassed of your clothes, house, car, etc. take one step back.

If your parents were professionals... doctors, lawyers, etc. take one step forward.

If you were raised in an area where there was prostitution, drug activity, etc. take one step back.

If you ever tried to change your appearance, mannerisms or behavior to avoid being judged or ridiculed, take one step back.

If you studied the culture of your ancestors in elementary school, take one step forward.

If you went to school speaking a language other than English, take one step back.

If there were more than 50 books in your house when you grew up, take one step forward.

If you ever had to skip a meal or went hungry because there was not enough money to buy food when you were growing up, take one step back.

If you were taken to art galleries or plays by your parents, take one step forward.

If one of your parents was unemployed or laid off, not by choice, take one step back.

If you attended private school or summer camp, take one step forward.

If your family ever had to move because they could not afford the rent, take one step back.

- If you were told that you were beautiful, smart... for the boys, handsome, smart and capable by your parents, take one step forward.
- If you were ever discouraged from academics or jobs because of race, class, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you are encouraged to attend college by parents, take one step forward.
- If you were raised in a single parent household, take one step back.
- If your family owned the house where you grew up, take one step forward.
- If you saw members of your race, ethnic group, gender or sexual orientation portrayed on television in degrading roles, take one step back.
- If you were ever offered a good job because of your association with a friend or family member, take one step forward.
- If you were ever denied employment because of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you were paid less or treated unfairly because of race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If your family ever inherited money or property, take one step forward.
- If you are to rely primarily on public transportation, take one step back.
- If you were ever afraid of violence because of your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If you were generally able to avoid places that were dangerous, take one step forward.
- If you were ever uncomfortable about a joke related to your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, but felt unsafe to confront the situation, take one step back.
- If you were ever the victim of violence related to your race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, take one step back.
- If your parents did not grow up in the United States, take one step back.

Appendix Sixteen: Alaska Standards for Culturally Responsive Schools  
Cultural Standards for Educators

- A. Culturally responsive educators incorporate local ways of knowing and teaching in their work.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

1. recognize the validity and integrity of the traditional knowledge system;
2. utilize Elders' expertise in multiple ways in their teaching;
3. provide opportunities and time for students to learn in setting where local cultural knowledge and skills are naturally relevant;
4. provide opportunities for students to learn through observation and hands-on demonstration of cultural knowledge and skills;
5. adhere to the cultural and intellectual property rights that pertain to all aspects of the local knowledge they are addressing;
6. continually involve themselves in learning about the local culture.

- B. Culturally responsive educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular bases to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

1. regularly engage students in appropriate projects and experiential learning activities in the surrounding environment;
2. utilize traditional settings such as camps as learning environments for transmitting both cultural and academic knowledge and skills;
3. provide integrated learning activities organized around themes of local significance and across subject areas;
4. are knowledgeable in all the areas of local history and cultural tradition that may have bearing on their work as a teacher, including the appropriate times for certain knowledge to be taught;
5. seek to ground all teaching in a constructive process built on a local cultural foundation.

- C. Culturally responsive educators participate in community events and activities in an appropriate and supportive way.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

1. become active members of the community in which they teach and make positive and culturally appropriate contributions to the well-being of that community;
2. exercise professional responsibilities in the context of local cultural traditions and expectations;
3. maintain a close working relationship with and make appropriate use of the cultural and professional expertise of their co-workers from the local community

D. Culturally responsive educators work closely with parents to achieve a high level of complementary educational expectations between home and school.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

1. promote extensive community and parental interaction and involvement in their children's education;
2. involve Elders, parents, and local leaders in all aspects of instructional planning and implementation
3. seek to continually learn about and build upon the cultural knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and community;
4. seek to learn the local heritage language and promote its use in their teaching.

E. Culturally responsive educators recognize the full educational potential each student and provide the challenges necessary for them to achieve that potential.

Educators who meet this cultural standard:

1. recognize cultural differences as positive attributes around which to build appropriate educational experiences
2. provide learning opportunities that help students recognize the integrity of the knowledge they bring with them and use that knowledge as a springboard to new understandings;
3. reinforce the students' sense of cultural identity and place in the world;
4. acquaint students beyond their home community in ways that expand their horizons while strengthening their own identities
5. recognize the need for all people to understand the importance of learning about other cultures and appreciating what each has to offer.

Appendix Seventeen: Osborne's nine assertions about cultural relevant pedagogy from a synthesis of more than 70 interpretive ethnologies of classrooms

Assertion one: Culturally relevant teachers need not come from the same ethnic minority group as the students they teach.

Assertion two: socio-historico-political realities beyond the school constrain much of what happens in classrooms and must be understood well by the culturally relevant teacher.

Assertion three: It is desirable to teach content that is culturally relevant to students' previous experiences, that fosters their natal cultural identity, and that empowers them with knowledge and practices to operate successfully in mainstream society

Assertion four: it is desirable to involve the parents and families of children from marginalized and normalized groups.

Assertion five: inclusion of students' first languages in the school program and in classroom interactions

Assertion six: Culturally relevant teachers are personally warm toward and respectful of, as well as academically demanding of, all students.

Assertion seven: Teachers who teach in culturally relevant ways spell out the cultural assumptions on which the classroom (and schooling) operate.

Assertion eight: There are five components of culturally relevant classroom management: using group work, controlling indirectly rather than confrontationally, avoiding "spotlighting," using an unhurried pace, using the home participation structures of the children.

Assertion nine: Racism is prevalent in schools and needs to be addressed.

## Appendix Eighteen: Transcript of Students Discussing their Native American Ancestry

Keanna: Actually, there's a lot in my family. Like Blackfoot. I don't even know what that is.

T: Blackfoot was a tribe.

Keanna: And Cherokee. And I've got \_\_\_\_\_.

T: Ok. Well, you might... Do you have a grandmother or someone older who you could ask?

Keanna: My mom's dad.

T: Ok. Could you maybe ask over the weekend and let us know? Because you have a lot of good and insightful comments and... Does anybody else know what tribes that your ancestry is? Yes?

M: We've got Cherokee and Iroquois.

T: Cherokee and Iroquois! Now that's unusual. That's really unusual. I've heard of a lot of... you know. But Iroquois... I don't hear as much of that outside of Canada. Like you'll meet a Canadian and they'll say they have... You, do you know? Any of the rest of you know? Ok.

M: I'm sleepy.

T: Oh, I understand. I can certainly relate. My people were Seminole and my family was originally from Florida. So we're mostly, I think, of African descent, as you see. But one day I'll bring in some pictures. We all came out looking very, very differently. So about 75% African-American descent and I have... I used to have issues growing up because I only claimed my African-American descent, but then friends would come over my house and they would see that my mom is fair-skinned and both my little sisters have different hair than me. And my little sister was fair-skinned. They would say, "You're not just all black. What else do you have in you?" Because I'd never considered it an issue. I felt as if being African-American that was identity for me. So you know, with Mrs. Sassi we said, "Will you talk about being Native American or descended from Native Americans?" But we're from Florida. I don't identify. I think identity, my African-American descendants here, because I have relatives who are still in... We still have a Puerto Rican branch of our family. So that's there, maybe underneath. But then the Native American part of that, because even with Latin American... How many of you have Spanish ancestry too, or Latin? Wow! [laughs] So several of you.

[many voices]

And you, too. So that's an issue. Like how do you... the thing I always ask is, "Do you claim all of your identities? Because some of you guys who didn't raise your hand, you have different identities. Like some of you guys have told me, "Well, I'm Scottish, Irish, Dutch and German." So which one of those do you claim? Or is "American" now a catchall for all of us? Can we just all say we're American and call it a day? Or do we celebrate our ancestry? Do certain people just get to paint their faces green on St. Patrick's Day as a way to remember? So these are just questions we wrestle with? Yes? What were you going to say about your people? And then we'll move on to the maps. But I wanted to make this personal for you guys before we just move on to Bush's act and stuff. Yes?

M: In some states, like even if you're biracial, like you're half black and half white, they'll still consider you black. They don't really give a crap about your other half. If you have like one-eighth black in you, you're still black.

T: You know, my mom's dad was the one from Puerto Rico and she wasn't raised by him. And my mother does not acknowledge anything but being African-American. So that's an identity. It's always been an identity thing for her because she's fair-skinned and she's also very slim... her body type. So my mom... I'm not saying she has identity issues, but one of the things I always point out to her is that our society values different kinds of beauty. And she's always been seen as pretty desirable and, you know, she's very... So we... it's just interesting. But she doesn't see herself as that. And she raised us very, very black, I think. And she just didn't really... really kind of swept those other identities under the rug. And that's because of the "one drop rule." If you have one drop... there's almost like a hierarchy. So if you're half white and half Native American then the Native American blood, although all of our blood looks the same if you cut us and that trumps it. But if you're Native American and African American, then oh, you're just really African American. So it's almost like a hierarchy of blood. It's just really weird. It's really, really weird.

But I think you should be able to claim all of your identities. And I'm learning that, as I get older, it's ok to embrace all of my identities. I'm learning more about the Taino Indians in Puerto Rico, learning more about the black heritage there, learning more about how it's different to be a Floridian. Florida is unlike any other state in this country. It's almost like California. It's kind of weird. And Floridian people, we're very different. We cook differently. You know, there are different traditions and customs and I'm beginning to embrace that as an adult and not feeling as if, "Oh, I'm less of a sistah if I can embrace these other things." Maybe I should explore some of my Native American heritage and maybe some of the rest of you guys might want to look into your own family histories. It would have been interesting, Mrs. Sassi, if we had time, and maybe we'll do it with House on Mango Street. It might be fun to do a genealogy tree.

How many of you guys have ever done your genealogies already? Oh, you've already done it. Would you do it again?

F: No.

T: [laughs] It would be really fun to like look at our family trees and just see... celebrate the diversity and maybe even...

F: I did it in 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

T: Well, oh, you can do a 9<sup>th</sup> grade one, you know, with pictures and histories and maybe telling some... This could be really cool. And then end up the year with food because we all... like all of your parents probably make really good food. Ok. I'm trying to make this interesting, so you know, we'll see.

Ratsa, yes thoughts?

Ratsa: You mean like [web?] type of things?

T: Yeah.

Ratsa: I've kind of already done that.

T: Oh, wow! Because since we've been talking, you've been thinking?

Ratsa: Yes.

T: It's so interesting because you know, a lot of times in our country we're not comfortable with people who exist on the margins. That means we're not comfortable... everybody has to be categorized. That means you have to be either *black* or *white*, *gay* or *straight*, *suburban* or *urban*, either you *like* rap music or you *don't* like rap music, either you're a Democrat or a Republican. So if people say, "I don't know," or, "I'm kind of both," you know, "I had one parent who was from one group and one parent from another." Americans tend... you know, some Americans because some of us are cool, but some Americans are like, "Oh my God, you have to choose!" You know, it breaks my heart when I hear people like Halle Berry \_\_\_\_\_ . Oh, I'm getting too animated. Halle Berry says that... it's frequency A, yep. It's ok. Oh gosh, where's it at? I know, I'm just getting excited.

[laughter]

T: It's a teachable moment. You guys are just great. Halle Berry says that her mom... because she was bi-racial... Her mom said she raised her as a black woman because she said, "In this country, you're going to face this, that and the other." But I said, "Well, she was raised by her mom and her mom was from

England. So her mom is first generation American, so Halle Berry is actually half British. So why wouldn't she want to embrace some of her heritage there? So going back to this, I thought it was really interesting for Dennis McAuliffe, which is an American name, to go back and look at that Osage ancestry and react to the book as an Osage man. Yes?

F: \_\_\_\_\_ .

T: Yeah, I know. I was trying to get myself together and narrate. I don't lecture a lot. I could lecture all day like some of my high school teachers did. Ok, go ahead.

F: I was like the different one in the family. Everybody got pretty hair except me [chuckles]. My little sister got curly hair. Like my mom says, "It's \_\_\_\_\_ ." I told her \_\_\_\_\_ .

T: Do you know that... isn't it hard for those of us who are from multi-racial families and we come out looking more... but that doesn't say anything about our family, that says something about our society. So remember, I put my pictures up on my blog and everybody was like, "Oh my God! Because they say people in my family who are really from Nate's complexion all the way down to a little bit darker than me. I'm on the darker end. And they're just like, "Oh my God! Those are all your blood relatives?" I was like, "Yeah." So you know... But it does make it hard because those of us who are in African-American or Latino families and were darker, sometimes there is that color issue too. So yeah, but I don't want to get into that. It's a whole different issue. It comes up in House on Mango Street, though, about who is beautiful and who is not seen as beautiful. One of the sisters has green eyes and she's considered more beautiful. Yes?

M: My mom and dad were telling me that they were made fun of because they were mixed. It was uncommon for a white and black person to...

T: Not back then, yeah.

M: And I thought it was kind of really messed up.

T: Yeah, so your generation needs to change these things. That's why we keep hammering this stuff into you because the adults are fixed. They're not going to ever change. As a matter of fact, the adults are trying to roll back the clock on a lot of issues. So your generation... you are the most... you are our hope in not just this area... a lot of other areas, too. Yes? Shhh...

F: I was going to say my sister, you can tell that she's like Mexican. \_\_\_\_\_ Native American. I look the most Aryan ever.

T: Aryan [chuckles].

F: My little brother is like the other one. So that's \_\_\_\_\_ that.

T: Yeah, and you know sometimes people will question... but it's just genetics. It's sort of a genetic lottery, depending on, you know, like how do we look or how do we come out. It's just really, really interesting.

So for House on Mango Street, the focus there is on family. Maybe we will bring in some pictures and do like a pictorial and share with everybody. Because I'm interested not just in those of us who are... I'm interested also in just all of you, and just what your family...

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